

2

The Tragedies
OF
The Last Age,

Consider'd and Examin'd
By the Practice of the Ancients,
AND
By the Common sense of all Ages
IN A
LETTER
TO
Fleetwood Shepherd, Esq;

By Mr. Rymer Servant to Their Majesties.

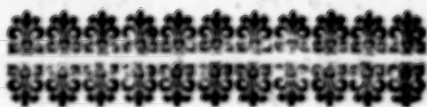
PART. I.

The Second Edition.

—Clement peristi pudorem.
Castigant patres; saepe reprehendere coser
Que gratia Albius, que datus Rastius egit. Hor.

London, Printed and are to be sold by Richard Baldwin, near
the Oxford Arms in Warwick Lane, and at the Black Lion be-
tween the two Temple Gays in Fleet-street. 1692.

18-133



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Advertisement.

There is also to be printed an Heroick Tragedy, call'd

E D G A R

By the same Hand.

The ERRATA.

PAGE 9. l. 12. r. *faces*. p. 12. l. 7. 9. r. *Epifode*. p. 44. lult. for the first r. *his*. and r. *compliments*. p. 54. l. 19. for *matter* r. *mettle*. p. 62. l. 18. for the r. *thee*. p. 48. l. 18. r. *quon*. p. 100. l. 12. dele a. p. 109. l. 6. for *the* r. *be*. p. 100. lult. r. *Evadne's*. p. 112. l. 21. r. *Lady's*. p. 116. l. 15. for *niff* r. *fi*. p. 118. l. 13. r. *muſes*. p. 124. l. 10. r. *with*.



T O

Fleetwood Shepheard, Esq;

HAVING several mornings, and
 early, travell'd to St. *James's*,
 with the only design of being with
 you; and missing you as often; I be-
 came so mortifi'd with the misfor-
 tune, that I resolv'd to come into the
 Town no more, till assur'd of your
 return from *Copt-Hill*: but because
 I meant not altogether to kill my self,
 for my entertainment I provided me
 some of those *Master pieces* of Wit,
 so renown'd every-where, and so edi-
 fying to the *Stage*: I mean the choi-
 cest and most applauded *English Tra-*
gedies of this last age; as *Rollo*; *A*
King and no King; the *Maids Tra-*
B
gedy

gedy by *Beaumont* and *Fletcher* ;
Othello, and *Julius Cæſar*, by *Shakeſ-*
pear ; and *Cataline* by *Worthy Ben.*

THESE I perus'd with ſome atten-
tion, and ſome reflections I made ; in
which, how far I miſtake your ſenſe,
that is, how far I am miſtaken, I de-
ſire to be inform'd.

I had heard that the *Theater* was
went to be call'd the *School of Ver-*
tue ; and *Tragedy* a *Poem for Kings* :
That they who firſt brought *Tragedy*
to perfection, were made *Vice-Roys*
and *Governors of Iſlands* ; were ho-
noured every-where with *Statues of*
Marble, and *Statues of Braſs* ; were
ſtil'd the *Wiſe Sophocles*, the *Wiſe*
Euripides by God and Man, by *Ora-*
cles and *Philophers*. That for
teaching *Morality*, *Crantor* and *Chry-*
sippus were no-body to 'em. This
latter tranſcrib'd the whole *Medea* of
Euripides into his works. That ſo
reſin'd a People, and ſo frugal a *Com-*
mon-wealth as *Athens* did tax and af-
ſeſs themſelves, and laid out more of
their publick *Exchequer* upon the re-
presentation of theſe Plays, than all
their

their Wars flood them in, though sometimes both Seas and Land were cover'd with Pagan Enemies that invaded them. And not *Aibens* only, but (who hated *Aibens*) so austere and gium a generation as those of *Sparta*, by the care of *Lycurgus*, agreed the same honour to these *Athenian Poets*.

These things coming into my mind, surely (thought I) mens brains lye not in the same place as formerly; or else Poetry is not now the same thing it was in those days of yore.

I therefore made enquiry what difference might be in our *Philosophy* and *Manners*; I found that our *Philosophers* agreed well enough with theirs, in the *main*; however, that our Poets have forc'd another way to the *wood*; a *by-road*, that runs directly cross to that of *Nature*, *Manners* and *Philosophy* which gain'd the *Ancients* so great veneration.

I would not examin the *proportions*, the *unities* and *outward* regularities, the *mechanical* part of *Tragedies*: there is no talking of Beau-

ties when there wants Essentials ; 'tis not necessary for a man to have a nose on his face, nor to have two legs : he may be a *true* man, though awkward and unsightly, as the *Monster* in the *Tempest*.

Nor have I much troubl'd their phrase and expression, I have not vex'd their language with the *doubts*, the *remarks* and eternal triflings of the *French Grammaticasters* : much less have I cast about for *Jests*, and gone a quibble-catching.

I have chiefly consider'd the *Fable* or *Plot*, which all conclude to be the *Soul* of a *Tragedy* ; which, with the *Ancients*, is always found to be a *reasonable Soul* ; but *with us*, for the most part, a *brutish*, and often worse than *brutish*.

And certainly there is not requir'd much Learning, or that a man must be some *Aristotle*, and *Doctor* of *Subtilties*, to form a right judgment in this particular ; common sense suffices ; and rarely have I known the *Women-judges* mistake in these points, when they have the patience to think,
and

and (left to their own heads) they decide with their own sense. But if people are prepossest, if they will judge of *Rollo* by *Osbello*, and one *crooked line* by another, we can never have a certainty.

Amongst those who will be objecting against the doctrine I lay down, may peradventure appear a sort of men who have remember'd *so* and *so*; and value themselves upon their *experience*. I may write by the *Book* (say they) what I have a mind, but they *know* what will *please*. These are a kind of *Stage-quacks* and *Empericks* in Poetry, who have got a *Recess* to *please*: And no *Collegiate* like 'em for *purging* the Passions.

These say (for instance) a *King* and no *King*, *pleases*. I say the *Comical* part *pleases*.

I say that *Mr. Hirt* *pleases*; most of the business falls to his share, and what he *delivers*, every one takes upon *content*; their *eyes* are prepossest and charm'd by his *action*, before ought of the *Poets* can approach their *ears*; and to the most wretched

of *Characters*, he gives a lustre and brilliant which dazzles the sight, that the *deformities* in the Poetry cannot be perceiv'd.

Therefore a distinction is to be made between what *pleases naturally* in it self, and what *pleases* upon the account of *Machines, Actors, Dances* and circumstances which are merely *accidental* to the *Tragedy*.

Aristotle observes, that in his time, some who (wanting the talent to write what might please) made it their care that the *Actors* should help out, where the *Muses* faild.

These objectors urge, that there is also another great *accident*, which is, that *Athens* and *London* have not the same *Meridian*.

Certain it is, that *Nature* is the same, and *Man* is the same, he loves, grieves, hates, envies, has the same affections and passions in both places, and the same springs that give them motion. What mov'd pity there, will here also produce the same effect.

This must be confest, unless they will, in effect say, that we have not
that

that *delicate* *tast* of things; we are not so *refin'd*, nor so *vertuous*; that *Athens* was more *civiliz'd* by their *Philosophers*, than we with both our *Philosophers* and *twelve Apostles*.

But were it to be suppos'd that *Nature* with us is a *corrupt* and de-
 pray'd *Nature*, that we are *Barbarians*, and *huminty* dwells not a-
 mongst us; shall our *Poet* therefore
 pamper this *corrupt* nature, and in-
 dulse our barbarity? Shall he not
 rather *puge* away the corruption,
 and reform our *manners*? Shall he
 not with *Orpheus* rather choose to
 draw the *Brutes* after him, than be
 himself a *follower* of the *Herd*?
 Was it thus that the *ancient* Poets
 (by the best *Philosophers*) became
 stild the *Fathers* of Knowledg, and
Interpreters of the Gods?

Lailly, (though *Tragedy* is a Poem
 chiefly for *men* of *sense*,) yet I cannot
 be perswaded that the people are so
 very mad of *Acorns*, but that they
 could be well content to eat the
Bread of civil persons.

Say others, *Poetry* and *Reason*, how come these to be Cater-cousins? Poetry is the *Child* of *Fancy*, and is never to be school'd and *disciplin'd* by *Reason*; Poetry, say they, is *blind* inspiration, is pure *enthusiasm*, is *rapture* and *rage* all over.

But *Fancy*, I think, in Poetry, is like *Faith* in Religion; it makes far discoveries, and soars above reason, but never clashes, or runs against it. *Fancy* leaps, and frisks, and away she's gone; whilst *reason* rattles the chains, and follows after. *Reason* must consent and ratify what-ever by *fancy* is attempted in its absence; or else 'tis all *null* and void in law. However, in the contrivance and *economy* of a Play, *reason* is always principally to be consulted. Those who object against reason, are the *Fanatics* in Poetry, and are never to be sav'd by their good works.

Others imagin that these rules and restraints on the *Plot* and *Argument* of Tragedy, wou'd hinder much good *intrigue*, wou'd clog invention, and make all *Plays* alike and *uniform*.

But

But certainly *Nature* affords plenty and variety enough of *Beauties*, that no man need complain if the *deform'd* are cloyster'd up, and shut from him. Such a Painter has been, who could draw nothing but a *Rose*; yet other Painters can design one and the same good face in a thousand several figures: it may be remember'd that there are but five vowels; or be consider'd, from *seven* Planets, and their several positions, how *many* faces and fortunes the *Astrologer* distributes to the people. And has not a Poet more *virtues* and *vices* within his *circle*, cannot he observe them and their influences in their several *situations*, in their *oppositions* and *conjunctions*, in their *altitudes* and *depressions*: and he shall sooner find his *ink*, than the *Stores* of Nature exhausted.

Other objections may be answer'd as they fall in the way. I would only have you before hand advertiz'd, that you will find me ty'd to no certain *stile*, nor laying my reasons together in *form* and *method*. You will find me sometimes reasoning, sometimes

times declaiming, sometimes citing authority for common sense; sometimes *uttering*, as my *own*, what may be had at any *Bookshop* in the Nation: sometimes doubting when I might be positive, and sometimes confident out of season; sometimes turning *Tragedy* into what is *light* and comical, and sporting when I should be serious. This variety made the travel more easy. And you know I am not cut out for writing a *Treatise*, nor have a *genius* to *pen* any thing *exactly*; so long as I am *true* to the *main sense* before me, you will pardon me in the rest.

Nor will it, I hope, give offence that I handle these *Tragedies* with the same liberty that I formerly had taken in examining the *Epick Poems* of *Spencer*, *Cowley*, and such names as will ever be *sacred* to me. *Rapin* tells us, for his own *Countrymen*, that none of them had writ a good *Tragedy*, nor was ever like to write one. And an (a) eminent *Ita-*

(a) O sia stata la loro poca fortuna, ò l'imperfezione della nostra lingua nelle cose gravi e *A. Tass. ne.*

lian confesses, that the best of theirs exceeded not a mediocrity; and yet their *Divine Tasso* had then writ a Tragedy, and *Torrismodo* strutted it in *buskins*.

But I have elsewhere declar'd my opinion, that the *English* want neither *genius* nor *language* for so great a work. And, certainly, had our Authors began with Tragedy, as *Sophocles* and *Euripides* leit it; had they either built on the same foundation, or after their *model*; we might e're this day have seen Poetry in greater perfection, and boasted such *Monuments* of wit as *Greece* or *Rome* never knew in all their *glory*.

According to the best account I can gather from old Authors.

Tragedy was originally, with the Ancients, a piece of *Religious* worship, a part of their *Liturgy*. The Priests sung an Anthem to their god
Diony-

Dionysus, whilst the *Goat* (b) stood at his Altar to be sacrific'd : And this was call'd the *Goat-song* or *Tragedy*.

These Priests were call'd the *Chorus*, and now the whole Ceremony was perform'd by them, till *Thespis* introduc'd the *Episodes*, and brought an *Actor* on the Stage.

Which *Episodes* the Priests at first mutini'd against as an *Innovation*, they listen'd a long while, thought it ran off from the Text, and wonder'd how it wou'd be appli'd, till at last their patience could hold no longer, and they roar'd out, (c) *Nothing to Dionysus*, *nothing to Dionysus*, which gave beginning to the Proverb.

But the *Poet* gaining upon them by little and little, enlarged the *Episode*, till it grew the *main part* ; the *part* which only is by us call'd the

(b) *Wou'd therefore read in Horace*, Vilem certavit ad hircum, at--Rhetor dicturus ad aras ; not being satisfied in Antiquity with what the Commentators devise, when they read,-- Vilem certavit ob hircum.

(c) *id est Neque Dionysus.*

Tragedy. And to make amends to *Dionysus*, the *Theaters* were all consecrated to him, and the Plays acted there, call'd *Dionysus's Plays*.

After much new-modelling, many changes and alterations, *Æschylus* came with a *second Actor* on the Stage, and lessen'd the business of the *Chorus* proportionably. But *Sophocles* adding a *third Actor*, and *painted Scenes*, gave (in *Aristotle's* opinion,) the utmost *perfection* to *Tragedy*.

And now it was that (the *men* of *sense* grown weary with discoursing of *Atoms* and *empty Space*, and the *humour* of *Mechanical Philosophy* near spent,) *Socrates* set up for *Morality*, and all the buz in *Athens* was now about vertue and good life.

Camerades with him, and *Confederates* in his worthy design, were our *Sophocles* and *Euripides*: But these took a different method.

He instructed in a pleasant facetious manner, by witty *questions*, *allusions* and *parables*.

These were for teaching by *examples*,

ples, in a graver way, yet extremely *pleasant* and *delightful*. And, finding in *Histoty*, the same *end* happen to the *righteous* and to the *unjust*, *ver-tue* often oppress'd, and *wickedness* on the Throne: they saw these particular *yesterday-truths* were imperfect and improper to illustrate the *universal* and *eternal truths* by them intended. Finding also that this *unequal* distribution of rewards and punishments did perplex the *wisest*, and by the *Atheist* was made a scandal to the *Divine Providence*. They concluded, that a *Poet* must of necessity see *justice* exactly administred, if he intended to please. For, said they, if the World can scarce be satisfi'd with God Almighty, whose holy will and purposes are not to be *comprehended*; a *Poet* (in these matters) shall never be pardon'd, who (they are sure) is not *incomprehensible*; whose *ways* and *walks* may, without *impiety*, be penetrated and examin'd. They knew indeed, that many things naturally unpleasant to the World in *themselves*, yet gave *delight* when well
imita-

imitated. These they consider'd as the (*d*) picture of some *deform'd* old Woman, that might cause *laughter*, or some light, superficial, and *comical* pleasure; but never to be endur'd on serious occasions, where the attention of the mind, and where the heart was engaged.

We have pictures that yield another sort of pleasure, as the *last Judgment*, of *Mich. Angelo*, the *Massacre of the Innocents*, the *Baptist's head*, &c.

'Tis true; but if they yield any pleasure besides what proceeds from the art, and what rests in eye. 'Tis by the History, to which the picture serves only as an *Index*.

For till our memory goes back to the History, the *head* of the *Baptist* can say no more to us, than the *head* of *Goliath*. But the Ancients in their Tragedies rested not on History.

They found that *History*, grossly taken, was neither proper to *instruct*, nor apt to *please*; and therefore they

(*d*) Aristotle, *Poet.*

would

would not trust History for their examples, but refin'd upon the History; and thence contriv'd something (c) more *philosophical*, and more *accurate* than *History*. But whether our *English* Authors of Tragedy lay their foundation so deep, whether they had any *design* in their *designs*, and whether it was to *prudence* or to *chance* that they sacrific'd, is the business of this present enquiry.

We have in *Herodian* the horrid and bloody story of the two Brothers, *Antoninus* and *Geta*, Emperors, all which (*crude* and undigested, as in the *Original*) we find cram'd into

The Tragedy of Rollo Duke of Normandy.

NO reason, I presume, can be given, why, having found an *History*, this Author should change the names; of *Antoninus* and *Geta*

(c) Σπουδαίοντες καὶ φιλοσόφουσαν.

into

into *Rollo* and *Otto*; *Emperors* of *Rome*, into *Dukes* of *Normandy*. Nor why he alter'd the *Scene* to bring these *Cut-throats* and *Poisoners* from the other side of the *Alps*. *Aristotle* tells it as extraordinary, of a *Tragedy* made by *Polemon*; wherein both the *names* and *matter* were of his own *invention*; and yet it had the fortune to *please*. He also reminds us that a man is better *pleas'd* with the *picture* of an *acquaintance*, than of a person of whom we had never *heard*. And we generally observe, when one tells of an *adventure*, or but a *jeast*, he will choose to father it on some one that is *known*, thereby to get attention, and gain more credit to what he relates. Besides, many things are *probable* of *Antoninus*; or of *Alexander*, and *particular* men, because they are *true*, which cannot be *generally probable*: and he that will be *feigning* persons, should confine his fancy to *general probability*.

The Fable is this :

Rollo and Otto Brothers , and both equally (let me call them) Kings of one and the same Kingdom, cannot agree about the matter. *Rollo* (by the means of his favourite *Latorch*) attempts to poison his Brother; which failing, he kills *Otto* in the arms of their Mother *Sophia*, with Sword drawn offers to kill his Mother and Sister *Mat.* but is disarm'd by *Aubrey*, yet sends out Lord Chancellor *Gisbert* to be chopt in two, and thrown to the dogs ; and his Tutor *Baldwin* also to be beheaded. *Hamond*, Captain of the Guards, saw all this executed. *Allan*, the Captain's Brother gives (his *quondam*-Master) the Chancellor, Christian Burial : for which, he is sent to pot. *Edith*, *Baldwin*'s Daughter, beseeches the King to spare her Father ; prevails, but too late. *Rollo* is in love with her ; she resolves his death. *Hamond*, in revenge of his Brother *Allan*, stabs, and is stab'd by *Rollo*, whose
Sister

Sister *Matilda*, *Aubrey* takes to Wife,
and Reigns in his stead.

Now, if you call this a Fable; give
me one of old *Æsop's*; where, for all
the coarse out-side, there dwells a lit-
tle *reasonable Soul* within, a little *good*
Sense at the bottom, which carries it
through all Nations, and will com-
mend it to the end of the World.

For nothing certainly is design'd in
this of *Rollo*, either to move *pitty* or
terror, either to *delight* or *instruct*.

It is indeed a History, and it may
well be a History; for never man of
common *sense* could set himself to in-
vent any thing so gross.

Poetry requires the *ben trovato*,
something *handsomely invented*, and
leaves the *truth* to History; but ne-
ver were the Muses profan'd with a
more foul, unpleasant, and unwhol-
some *truth*, than this which makes
the Argument of *Rollo*.

If the *end* of this *Tragedy* is the
Marriage and Coronation of *Aubrey*,
had one of the ancient Poets been to
cultivate this History; They would
have laid the right of the Crown in
C 1 *Aubrey*.

Aubrey. They would have given us to understand, that *Aubrey's* Father, a good King, rais'd *Rollo's* Father from a mean condition to be his favourite, and have the places of greatest trust and confidence with him. This ungrateful Villain most treacherously murders the King his Master, settles himself on his Throne, dies in Peace, leaves the Kingdom equally to his two Sons. These Sons enter upon the Government, the people swear Allegiance to 'em, Complement them with Addresses from all Countreys; the Air rings with *Vive-le-Roy's* and Acclamations. The Sun shines as it was wont, the Grass grows, Cows give white Milk, and no *Ægyptian* Plague troubles the Land. Heaven has forgot, and human means appear none, for either revenging the murder'd King, or restoring his Son *Aubrey*.

Now is the time for a Poet to shew his cunning. Now he must bring a sudden and terrible judgment to destroy the *Rollian*-Race, and set young *Aubrey* on the Throne of his Ancestors.

To

To effect this, the two Brothers must be made to kill each other ; and, as a consequence of this disaster, their Mother is to kill her self for sorrow.

These Brothers, in their character, would have been harmless men, modest enough, and loving each other tenderly : for had they been wicked, the judgment upon them might be apply'd as due to their own crimes. Or however their Fathers crime in it self would have appear'd less, as not enough alone to deserve that vengeance ; and if the occasion was not clear, the punishment would be less regarded ; but their innocence makes the punishment more signal and extraordinary, and more discovers the work of Heaven. And thus also they are capable of moving pity, when only their Father's crime pursues them ; and it seems likely that, otherwise, they might have liv'd happily together.

Their Sister *Matilda* must have been a vertuous sweet Lady, every way of singular merit, sensible of her

Father's crime, and of the wrong that *Aubrey* suffers. By this character, all those who had *pittied* her Brothers, would have been extremely satisfi'd to see their Sister so well prefer'd in the Marriage with *Aubrey*; for Heaven, by this, would seem, in her, to make some amends for the hard measure to the unfortunate Brothers.

Aubrey should in all his words and actions appear great, promising, and Kingly, to deserve that care which Heaven manifests so wonderfully in his Restoration.

And because this, of the two Brothers killing each other, is an action *morally* unnatural; therefore, by way of *preparation*, the *Tragedy* would have begun with Heaven and Earth in disorder, *nature* troubl'd, unheard-of *prodigies*; something (if I may so say) *physically* unnatural, and against the ordinary course of nature. Perhaps the first *Scene* would have shew'd the Usurper's *Ghost* from Hell, full of horror for his crime, cursing his Sons, and sending some infernal *sway* amongst them. And,

And, by the way, he might relate all things fit to be known, which pass out of the *Drama*.

The nicety in writing upon this *Fable*, would have chiefly been in the *characters* of the two Brothers, These are the persons kill'd, and, of all things, a Poet must be tender of a mans life, and never *sacrifice* it to his *Maggot* and *Capriccio*. Therefore, as (I said) the Brothers were not to be *wicked*, so likewise they ought not to be absolutely innocent. For if they had refused to succeed their Father, and when they might have sat on the Throne, have humbled themselves at *Aubrey's* feet ; then no *Poetical Justice* could have touch'd them : guilty they were to be, in enjoying their Father's crime ; but not of committing any new. And this guilt of theirs was also either to be palliated, or else to be pass'd over in silence, lest, laid too open, the compassion of the Audience might be abated. Neither would it suffice that these Brothers kill each other by some chance; but it should appear, that agitated by their

Father's crime, like *Machines*, they unavoidably clash against each other; whilst their proper *inclination* in vain strives against the *violence*.

If the *English Theatre* requires more *intrigue*, an Author may multiply the *Incidents*, may add *Episods*, and *thicken* the *Plot*, as he sees occasion; provided that all the *lines* tend to the same *center*: more of a main *Plot*, *Virgil* requir'd not for his *Epic Poem*.

And peradventure, if the Poet design any certain *sense* by his *Fable*, that *sense* will bind him to the *unity* of *action*; and the *unity* of *action* cannot well exceed the rule for *time*. And these two *unities* will not permit that the Poet can far transgress in the *third*. So that all the *regularities* seem in a manner to be link'd together: but begin with an absurdity, and nothing reasonable can ever follow. If a Pilot puts to Sea without resolving for what Port, none can wonder that he sails not by the *Compass*.

To return to this *Tragedy* of *Rollo*,
if

if the stress of the design rests not on *Aubrey* ; but the sense of all *terminates* in *Rollo*. The sense must be this ; *He that sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed*. And if this be all, where's the Wonder ? Have we not every day cried in the Streets, instances of God's *revenge* against *murder*, more extraordinary, and more poetical than all this comes to ? If this be Poetry, *Tyburn* is a better and more ingenious *School* of *Vertue*, than the *Theatre*.

In former times *Poetry* was another thing than *History*, or than the *Law* of the Land. *Poetry* discover'd crimes, the *Law* could never find out ; and punish'd those the *Law* had acquitted. The *Areopagus* clear'd *Orestes*, but with what *Furies* did the *Poets* haunt and torment him ? and what a wretch made they of *Oedipus*, when the *Cassus* excus'd his *invincible* ignorance ?

The *Poets* consider'd, that naturally men were affected with *pitty*, when they saw others suffer more than their fault deserv'd ; and *vice*, they thought,

thought, could never be painted too ugly and frightful ; therefore, whether they would move *pitty*, or make *vice* detested, it concern'd them to be somewhat of the severest in the punishments they inflicted. Now, because their hands were tied, that they could not punish beyond such a degree ; they were oblig'd to have a strict eye on their Malefactor, that he transgress not too far, that he committed not *two* crimes, when but responsible for *one* : nor, indeed, be so far guilty, as by the Law to deserve death. For though *historical Justice* might rest there ; yet *poetical Justice* could not be so content. It would require that the satisfaction be complete and full, e're the *Malefactor* goes off the *Stage*, and nothing left to God Almighty, and another World. Nor will it suffer that the Spectators trust the *Poet* for a *Hell* behind the *Scenes* ; the fire must roar in the conscience of the *Criminal*, the *fiends* and *furies* be conjur'd up to their faces, with a world of *machine* and horrid spectacles ; and yet the *Criminal* could

could never move *pitty*. Therefore amongst the *Ancients* we find no Malefactors of this kind ; a wilful Murderer is with them as strange and unknown, as a *Paricide* to the old *Romans*. Yet need we not fancy that they were squeamish, or unacquainted with any of these great *lumping* crimes in that age ; when we remember their *Oedipus*, *Orestes*, or *Medea*. But they took care to wash the Viper, to cleanse away the venom, and with such art to prepare the morsel : they made it all Junket to the tast, and all Physick in the operation.

They so qualifi'd, so allaid, and cover'd the *crime* with circumstances, that little could appear on the *Stage*, but either the causes and provocations before it, or the remorse and penitence, the despairs and horrors of conscience which follow'd, to make the *Criminal* every way a fit object for *pitty*. Nor can we imagin their *Stage* so rarely endur'd any bloodshed, and that the sight was displeasing, because the Spectators were some sort of effeminate, unfighting
fel-

fellows. When we remember the Battels of *Marathon* and *Salamin*; and with what small number these very Spectators had routed *Xerxes* and the greatest Armies in the World. For now it was that the arms of the *Athenians* (as well as their arts) shin'd in their greatest glory.

The truth is, the *Poets* were to move pity; and this pity was to be mov'd for the living, who remain'd; and not for the dead. And they found in nature, that men could not so easily pardon a crime committed before their faces; and consequently could not be so easily dispos'd to bestow that pity on the *Criminal* which the Poets labour'd for. The Poets, I say, found that the sight of the fact made so strong an impression, as no art of theirs could afterwards fully conquer.

But leave reasoning, and return to *Rollo*; it seems very odd to see the first four *Scenes* pass as if nothing extraordinary were towards, without any preparation; and immediately, without more ado, the two Brothers,

two Kings, are a fighting. The *Ancients* would have made the Earth tremble, and the Sun start out of the Firmament at a sight so unnatural. Yet we make no more of them, but turn them out, like two Cocks of the Game, for the diversion of the Rabble.

Some have remark'd, that *Athens* being a *Democracy*, the Poets, in favour of their Government, expos'd Kings, and made them unfortunate. But certainly, examin the Kings of their *Tragedies*, they appear all *Heroes*, and ours but *Dogs*, in comparison of them. So respectul they seem to Kings in their *Democracy*, and so unthinking and unpolitick are our Poets under a *Monarchy*. *Thebes* was always enemy to *Athens*, yet would not any *National* pique, nor other, provoke the Poets to treat those Kings unhandsomly; because by their rules to have lessen'd the Kings, would have made their *Tragedies* of no effect, in moving the pity intended by them. They made the Kings *unfortunate*, we make them
wicked

wicked: they made them to be pitied, we make them to be curst and abhorr'd.

That I may, in all hitherto laid down, be the better understood, let it be observ'd what measures *Euripides* took in the Tragedy of *Eshecles* and *Polynices*.

This instance I choose, the condition of those *Theban* Kings being the neerest to this of *Rollo* and *Otto*: for they also were equally Kings, could not agree, kill'd each other. That we might not suspect that the dissention between them rose from any malice of their own, we are let to know, that the Gods owe a vengeance to *Thebes*, which is now ripe, and ready to fall upon them, for a crime of their Founder *Cadmus*.

That their Grandfather *Laius* warn'd by the Oracle not to marry, his Marriage had so incens'd the Gods, that now they were punishing his disobedience on the third generation.

That their Father *Oedipus* had curst them, and praid they might dye by each others hands. These

These Brothers, to avoid their Father's curse, agree, not to live together, but to Reign by the year alternately, and each to be King in his turn. According to this agreement, the younger Brother goes into banishment, where he marries, makes Allies of some *hot-headed* Princes, as *Tydeus*, *Copaneus*, and five more, and brings a Confederate Army before *Thebes*. The Brothers have an interview; *Polynices* demands his turn; *Eteocles* answers to this effect.

Now, whilst I may continue a King, I cannot willingly yield to become a Servant. Neither take you a right course, coming with force of Arms, and laying the Countrey wast. *Thebes* would blush, should I resign my Scepter for fear of the *Mycenzan* spears. In fine, Brother, if I am to transgress, for a Kingdom I would transgress; in all the rest (f) serve God.

This haughty speech of *Eteocles* turns all the current of pitty to his Brother's side. Now the Confederates

fall on to storm the Town, are repuls'd, with great slaughter on both sides. *Esbeocles*, notwithstanding he was the King in possession, notwithstanding he knew (by *Tyresias* the Prophet) that the *Thebans* would be victorious, and notwithstanding the danger of his Father's curse; yet out of his generosity and humanity to save the effusion of innocent blood; offers the single Combat with his Brother; which accepted, both are kill'd, and dye friends. *Esbeocles* could not speak, indeed, but his sighs were all tenderness. The last breath of *Polynices* made these words;

(g) *My friend turn'd enemy, but still my friend.*

But though *Polynices* seems ill treated, and his Brother is much too sharp upon him. The reason given by the *Poet*, is, because he brings foreign Forces to invade his Native Countrey: and perhaps the *Poet* on this occasion might somewhat strain his *Philosophy* to gratify the *Politi-*

(h) *My friend turn'd enemy, but still my friend.*
tion,

clash, but the Poet seems so afraid that the *Audience* should forget that these dissensions are the effect of their Ancestors crimes ; and in no wise spring from their own ill mind and election ; that he is every where a hinting to us the curse entailed on the Family by their Grandfathers Marriage ; the violence of superior powers, of Demons and Furies, which we want language to express, — *I find in his Ode* or some terrible goddess discord.

— *But here, here surely is the deed.*

Let us dispute. — Whether discord or your Father is the cause, or some ill spirit. *Edipus* *misadvent* suffer for the old pique against *Cadmus*, *when* *the* *land* is sick, *in* *the* *terrors* *of* *dark* *days* *breath'd* — breath'd terrible curses against them, *and* *deeds* *most* *unhallowed* *curse* *to* *his* *Sons*, *the* *one* *day* *of* *his* *latter* *days* *is* *the* *curse* *of* *his* *father*. God is ready to fulfil your curses, because in spite of the gods *Lains* made Children, *and* *most* *of* *his* *hand* — hand-
ing the curses from *Lains* down to

D

his

his posterity, — ἔγὼ — ἀνὴρ θνητὸν εἶμι, —
 I was not born such a fool to pull out
 my own eyes, and curse my Sons, if
 some of the Gods had not made me
 mad, says *Oedipus*, διὰ τὸ τῶν ἀδελφῶν, —
 because of your fiends. ἡ δὲ ἀδελφὴ, —
 your fiend is the cause.

ἔδωκεν ἰνὸν τῆς γῆς

ἀπορῶντα δαίμονες τῇ γῇ, some bane sent
 upon the land by evil spirits, γὰρ
 ἰμῶντι δῖον, the bane fixed to the Mar-
 riage of *Laius*, οὐδεὶς ἔσθ' ἐκφυγεῖν
 not escape their Fathers *Furies*,
 χαρὰν ἰμῶντι, the joy of the *Furies*,
 ἵνα ἰμῶντι, because of the *Furies*,
 μῦθος ἰμῶντι, the Plague of the *Furies*,
 σπῆλαι δαίμονες τῆς γῆς, sighing curses against
 his Sons, ἅτις τὴν θείαν, — what comes
 from god, δαίμονες, haunted with
 evil spirits διὰ τῶν πολυίνων ἐνέριον,
Polynices had his name from Conten-
 tion.

By what I have noted one might
 think the Poet would have us be-
 lieve that all the *Furies* in Hell were
 broke loose and at work to make
 these two Brothers miserable, and
 consequently would have us take
 their

their part, would engage our affections, and carry our heart along with a sense of their sufferings: Heaven and Earth conspire their ruine.

Quid meus Æneas in te committere tantum?

What had they done to deserve this persecution? the curse of their Father lay nearest them, and is most insisted on by the Poet, how had they vexed their Father? their Father transported with the sense of his own horrible misfortunes, tore out his own Eyes, and in that condition would have run about the streets, but these two Sons of his kept him within doors by force, this enrag'd him the more, and he threw his curses about him, which some evil spirits (who haunted the house for some old accounts) gladly lay hold on, and never rested till those curses had their effect.

By what has been observ'd any one may judge whether these *Characters* of *Eteocles* and *Polynices*, or those of *Rollo* and *Otto* be the better contrived for moving that pity which

Tragedy requires. And I have been the more particular, because not only *Rollo*, but most of the *Characters* in our *Tragedies* of the last Age, may be examin'd by the same reason. And yet *Eurypides* has been blam'd for making his *Characters* more wicked then they ought to be in *Tragedy*: he was not taxed by *Aristophanes* and *Aristotle* only, but by *Sophocles*, and the general sense of *Athens* was against him. They said, in those days, that *Comedy* (whose Province was humor and ridiculous matter only) was to represent things worse then the truth. *History* to describe the truth, but *Tragedy* was to invent things better then the truth. Like good *Painters* they must design their *Images* like the *Life*, but yet better and more beautiful then the *Life*. The *Malefactor* of *Tragedy* must be a better sort of *Malefactor* then those that live in the present Age. For an obdurate impudent and impenitent *Malefactor* can neither move compassion nor terror; nor be of any imaginable use in *Tragedy*.

See we then *Rollo*, fighting with his own Brother and King, equal to himself, and attempting to poyson him, without any remorse; killing him in their mothers arms, without any provocation; calling the Queen their Mother *Belldam*, and with drawn sword threatning to kill both her and his Sister, without any sense of honour or piety; and must we not imagine a Legion of Devils in his belly. When *Rollo* has murder'd his Brother, he stands condemn'd by the Laws of Poetry; and nothing remains but that the Poet see him executed, and the Poet is to answer for all the mischief committed afterwards. But *Rollo* we find has made his escape, and we be to the Chancellor, to the Schoolmaster, and the Chancellors Man; for those are to be men of this world no longer. Here is like to be *Poetical Justice*, so many lives taken away, and but the life of one guilty person to answer for all, and is not this a strange method of killing? If the *Planets* had contriv'd him for a *Cock* of thirteen, his first Victory should not have

D ; been

been the most important, he should first have prais'd on his subjects, and have risen by degrees to the height of iniquity. His Brother Sovereign was his top-murder; nothing remain'd after that, unless it were his Lady-Mother.

Neither is *Otto* here a much more taking Gentleman, nothing appears in his *Cue* to move pity, or any way make the Audience of his party.

But of all the world who wou'd ever have expected that *Aubrey* is to succeed in the Kingship? 'Tis a good man, but the dullest good man that ever Poet advanc'd to a Throne by such extraordinary means. Some Dreams or old Prophecie should have begun an expectation in us; or some *Lambent-fires* incircling his head, have drawn the peoples eyes upon him. *Rollo* and *Otto* must both make untimely ends, to make way for *Aubrey*. So strange a Revolution never happens in Poetry, but either Heaven or Earth gives some forenotice of it.

However

However, something shining and extraordinary ought to have appear'd in his *Character*. Indeed he parts *Rollo* and *Otto* fighting, and *Rollo* was once disarm'd by him. But then for decencies sake and *Rollo's* credit, he should have been lookt on as something more then a meer Subject. In all the rest he appears an humble endcavourer, speaks honestly to no purpose, is brav'd and abus'd by Rascals. Whereas each step of his shou'd have been attended with such awe and Majesty, that the spectators, if not guess, might at least wish to see him their Sovereign; and have the pleasure to see their wishes successful.

Gisbert and *Baldwin*, Chancellor and Tutor are *Devota Capita*, only come on the *Stage* to make *Rollo* the greater sinner by their murder.

Further to shew his rage against the Chancellor, says *Rollo*,

Captain, besides remember this in chief,

That being executed, you deny,

D +

To

To all his Friends the rites of Funeral,
 And cast his Carcass out to Dogs
 and Fowls.

No reason here is given for this inhumanity.

On the like occasion *Sophocles* contriv'd a Tragedy, the Plot is this. By the death of *Esheocles* and *Polynices*, *Creon* King of *Thebes* made an Edict, that none, upon pain of being buried alive, should presume to give burial to *Polynices*, the reasons pretended are, That *Polynices* had brought Forreigners to invade his Country, and *Esheocles* had dyed in his Countreys defence, and therefore it would be unjust to give to both the same honour of Funeral. He further alledges a charge left by *Esheocles* to the same effect. Now the piety of *Antigone* could not digest so hard a Law, but in the night she goes and covers her Brother with earth, is taken by the Watch, and (*Creon* being deaf to all intercession) is sent to punishment. When the Bishop *Tyresias* reproving *Creon* strikes him with remorse,

morfe, who thereupon runs himself to reprieve her, hears from her Tomb the last groans of his only Son *Haemon*, who he finds had stabb'd himself and lay a dying at the feet of *Antigone*, his dead Mistress. This disaster brought the same violent Fate on the Queen *Eurydice*, and with her depriv'd *Creon* of all that could be dear to him in the world.

In this we have every thing *just*, every thing *surprizing*, every thing *passionate* to extremity.

Whereas in *Rollo* we meet with so much stuff lumberd together, that not the least spring can work, nor the least passion stir, that is pleasant or generous; nor the least proportion or beauty of Tragedy appear. *Aristotle* says that an Image drawn with Chalk in the exact shape and symmetry, will please more then a whole potful of the best Colours thrown upon a wall without any figure or design.

But to proceed with the Characters. *Sophia* at the first appears a woman of spirit, in opposing so vehemently the division of the Dukedom.

But

But she ill maintains this Character ;
 when *Rollo* in her presence murders
 his Brother, threatens both her and
 her Daughter, she very tamely ex-
 horts the Daughter to a vile com-
 pliance, says she

*Rise Daughter, serve his will in
 what we may,*

*Least what he may not, he enforce
 the rather.*

Is this all you command us ?

She ought surely in another sort of
 tone to have resented this outrage,
 or before to have manifested a parti-
 ality for *Rolla*.

At his death History informs us
 she died of grief. 'Tis a wonder this
 Tragedy spares her ; hers would
 have been a more decent and Poeti-
 cal death than any of the rest. In
 this the History is the better Tra-
 gedie.

The Princess *Matilda* for the small
 part she bears, acquits her self brave-
 ly enough. Yet, methinks, *Aubrey*
 and she should have exchang'd some
 words ; some glances have been cast,
 or otherways some approaches have
 been

been begun. For here there scarce go three words to the bargain. In the last lines of the Play he comes to this Lady as abruptly as to the *Dukedom*, both drop into his mouth.

In Edith these waylings, clingings, and beseechings ; these showers of tears and words.

*---as you are a god above us,
Be as a god then full of saving
pity,*

*Mercy, O Mercy Sir, for his sake
Mercy,*

*That when your stout heart weeps,
shall give you pity.*

Here I must grow.

This sort of importunity is nothing so proper in this place, it might much better become *Comedy*, where Miss *La Fool* intercedes for little Dog or Moncky, in peril for some misdemeanor ; something more of stomach and courage had suited her better. Tragedy requires not what is only Natural, but what is great in Nature, and such thoughts as quality and Court-education might inspire. She might indeed be surpriz'd, and at the first let the meer Natural woman escape

escape a little, but one or two so harsh and barbarous repulses should have rouz'd that Tragical spirit so vilely prostituted, and made her reflect on the other bloody scenes, so lately acted before her eyes, and caus'd her to despair before she had troubl'd us with her endless impertinencies.

Nor indeed comes short of her for tongue and wind, the old *Dutchess*, when in all reason one might expect that so violent grief and passions would choak them; they run chattering, as if the concern were no more then a *gossiping*: theirs are not of the old cut, *Curae leves loquuntur ingentes stupent.*

Take her then resolv'd to kill this *Holofernes*, when she sets up for a *Heroine*, and will revenge the blood of the murder'd King *Otto*. of her Father, and the rest. When that scene presents her full of dire design and bloody purpose, we then indeed have her concise in word, and *Lacornick* in the *repartee*. To the first Complement she answers.

Your

Your grace is full of game.

Wilt please you sit Sir.

Of what Sir.

Has a strange cunning tongue,

Why do you sigh Sir.

*My anger melts , O I shall lose
my justice.*

His tongue will tempt a Saint.

He will fool me.

Is it likely that a Lady in her circumstances could be sensible what a pretty lisping way he had with him; or could listen to the soft things he spoke, or answer him so lightly? is not this more like some *Minx* in an Alley, then any Character for Tragedy? There are in Women comical frailties, and heroick frailties: and several considerations might have made her resolution stagger; but this of the *tempting tongue* is *Comedy* out of season.

I would also in this scene note this passage, says

Ham. Pray.

Roll. Pray.

*Ham. Pray if thou canst pray, I
will*

will kill thy soul else.

Pray suddenly.

This I think sounds not so well in Poetry, whatever it may do in Divinity. And now that I am upon the short Dialogues, let me cite one that went before.

Ham. *See Sir Gisberts head.*

Roll. *Good speed, was't with a sword.*

Ham. *An Axe, my Lord.*

Roll. *An Axe, 'twas vilely done.*

But leaving *Edith*, let us examine what was there in this *Latorch* to give him the ascendant over his Sovereign? Was it his Quality, his Valour, or some Pestilent Wit, or what Fiddle had he to Charm this savage Master of his? (a) An Historian (who was never taxt for a prodigal of his words) could not mention the *Dame* that led *Cataline* astray, without annexing the Inventory of her Excellencies, as how well she Danc'd, how she handl'd the Lute, and how she spoke Greek. Yet *Rollo* a Prince of as great importance to us, is led by the Nose to do all the mischiefs under

† (a) *Salust.*

the Sun ; and no body knows who 'tis does manage him.

'Tis possible that a Prince may abandon himself to be rul'd by some busie creature of no consideration. The *Annals* of *Normandy* may mention such *Dukes*.

History may have known the like. But *Aristotle* cries shame. *Poetry* will allow of nothing so unbecoming, nor dares any Poet imagine that God Almighty would trust his Anointed with such a Guardian Devil.

In the third *Act* enters *Hamond*, Captain of the Guard, and is a nimble Executioner ; and who would guess this the Man ordain'd to kill the Dragon. But whether in *Poetry* this job more properly belong'd to *Edith*, or to this *Hamond*, may be a question.

In the first place 'tis resolv'd that to neither of them did it belong, but that (of the two) *Edith* might rather have kill'd *Rollo*, the following reasons may prove, *viz.*

1. To *Edith* the provocation was greater ; a Father engaging our Piety more strongly than a Brother.
2. *Ha-*

2. *Hamond* holding a place of trust, had a stricter eye upon him : and *Edith* lying under no such obligation ; the fact in her would not have been subject to so many aggravations.

3. She, as a woman, might be presum'd not so well to understand Allegiance, and to distinguish how far her Piety was to be restrain'd by it.

4. As in her sex reason is said to be more feeble, so the Passions are suppos'd to be the more violent and precipitate.

5. The punishment had been more signal and more grievous to the Tyrant, dying by the hand of a woman, and a woman to whom he was making love.

6. By a woman the fact would have been more surprising and extraordinary ; and greater would have been the wonder, which a Poet always endeavours for, when it clashes not with probability.

7. *Baldwin* was of better quality than *Allan*. For though the Maid might be content enough to be rob'd of her revenge ; yet what would her
Fathers

Fathers Ghost say ? And indeed what would the *Chancellor's* and *Otto's* Ghost say ? was their blood dumb ? or was not the cry of their blood to be heard ? must they be murder'd and no harm ensue ? only to the Manes of the *Chancellors* Man must this Monarch be sacrific'd.

Allan *te hoc vulnere*--- says *Hamond*.

Allan, my Brother *Allon* gives this stab.

Allon it seems is satisfi'd, whilst his betters must be fain to appeal, and wait till *Doomsday*.

Hitherto the Plot and Characters.

For the thoughts and good sense, compare the speech against dividing the Dukedom, with that in *Herodian* (from whence our Author takes it) on that same occasion. Upon the division it was agreed, the one Brother to have *Europe*, the other to have *Asia*; which their Mother hearing, thus spoke,

The Sea and Land, my Sons, you have found how to divide ; the Propontick, you say, is a bound for either Continent, but how is it that

B

you

*you will divide your Mother ? how
shall wretched I be cut in two and
disposed on to each of you ? first, there-
fore, first slay me, and each of you take
his moiety with him, and bury it. So
with the Sea and Land, I also shall
be divided between you.*

*Says Sophia,
Divide me first, and tear me limb
by limb,
And let them find as many several
graves,
As there are Vilages in Normandy,
And 'tis less sin than so to weaken it.
To hear it mention'd, does already
make me
Envy my dead Lord, & almost
BlaspHEME
Those powers which heard my
prayers for fruitfulness.
And did not with my first birth
close my womb.
To me alone my second blessing
proves my first,
My first of misery, for if heaven
That gave me Rollo, there had
stay'd his bounty,
And Otto, my dear Otto ne're had
been, Or*

*Or being had not been so worth my
love;*

*The stream of my affection had run
constant,*

*In one fair current all my hopes
had been*

*Laid up in one, and fruitful Nor-
mandy*

*In this division had not lost her
glories.*

*For as 'tis now, 'tis a fair Dia-
mond*

*Which being preserv'd entire, ex-
ceeds all value*

*But cut in pieces (though these pie-
ces are*

*Set in fine gold by the best work-
mans cunning)*

*Parts with all estimation. So this
Kingdom*

*As 'tis yet whole, the neighbouring
Kings may covet*

*But cannot compass, which divided
will*

*Become the spoil of every barba-
rous Foe*

That will invade it:

The former speech seems to show a Woman of great spirit, labouring to contain her passion till she may utter her mind : But this latter seems to present a *well-breath'd* and *practis'd Scold*, who vents her passion and eases her mind by talking, and can weep and talk everlastingly.

In that of *Julia* we find but one *thought*, yet that follow'd close and press'd with all the vehemence that a strong passion might inspire ; as may be easily apprehended by any who understand in *Virgil*,

*It lachrymans, guttisque humectat
grandibus ora.*

She is not content to say, divide me, but to lay the Image before their eyes, and make the stronger impression. She will, *like the Sea and Land be divided*, be cut in two, be shar'd out to them, to each his moiety, &c.

But what a pother makes the old *Dutchess* ? never *French* Author hash'd and kickshaw'd a little sense into so many words that signifie nothing

thing. She manages as if she were to hold forth by the glass : Had her passion after the first three words burst out at her eyes, had she wept and torn her hair, her *Rhetorick* had been more moving, and better understood, and she had acquitted her self Heroickly : But she falls off immediately, as if she had bolted out some rash thing at first, and was afraid of being ta'ne at her word ; her tongue runs over her passion, and steals into matters that lean another way, and she talks as if she would talk the impression of her first words quite out of the hearers heads again. After the three first words she flies from the only thought that was proper, high enough, and proportionable to her passion : she is for being split in as many pieces as there are *Villages* in *Normandy* ; which expression scatters the thought, breaks the resemblance and carries all remote from the occasion, and must in effect move but very indifferently. From thence she plunges into such impertinent and inconsistent wild *jargon* as is obvious to

any man. That of the Diamond is a good thought in it self ; but in this place comes very cold from her mouth, 'tis no more than if she had said, *Divide the Dukedom, divide me first, nay divide a Diamond, &c.* Naturally in a great passion none have leisure to ramble for comparisons, much less to compute the value of Diamonds whole or broken.

I question not the *Grammar*, nor how Poetical the stile is, I rest in the sense, nor had yet been so particular, but that I take all this Tragedy to be of the same *piece* for the writing, unless that scene of the *Astrologers* ; and the Comical part, than which nothing can be more diverting.

Speeches of more matter I confess we have in the Play, and to *Latorch* we are oblig'd for them.

*No friends, Sir, to your honour,
Friends to your fall, where is your
understanding
The noble vessel that your full soul
sail'd in,*

Ribb'd

*Ribb'd round with honours, where
is that ? 'tis ruin'd.*

*The tempest of a womans sighs has
sunk it.*

*Friendship, take heed, Sir, is a smi-
ling Harlot,*

*That when she kisses, kisses a soder'd
friendship,*

*Piec'd out with Promises ; O pain-
ted Ruine !*

This *Latorch* alwaies *Cants* at this rate, and an extraordinary *Muse* attends him. We may, I think, conclude the success of this Play due chiefly to the Scenes for laughter, the merry jig under the Gallows, and where the Tragedy tumbles into the Kitchen among the Skoundrels that never saw buskin in their lives before. There the Pantler and Cook give it that relish which renders it one of the most followed entertainments in the Town.

A King and no King.

WELL fares it with Tragedy (says an (a) old stager) the title is no sooner known, but the Spectators see into the design, and agree what they are to expect. Name Oedipus, they know Laius was his Father, Jocasta his Mother, and all the generation: so there needs no more but hold up a finger, the Curtain's drawn, and t'ot they go.

But ill is our condition, we are fain to coin new words, explain what is past, present, and to come, yet never can be understood enough, and without this ado whether Phidon or whether Chremes enters, he is hist off the Stage; when as Teucer, Oedipus, or Pelcus might come with authority.

(a) Antiphanes apud Athen.

Our Authors we see, never make use of the advantage which that *Comedian* envy'd so much in Tragedy. This Title gives no more light into the design, then had they call'd it *Hocus Pocus*; and indeed the name seems rather to promise a *Comedy*, and one might expect some sort of *Mamamouchy* King, or Cozen of *Duke Trinchelo's* for the Heroe of the Play.

The Plot is this :

The Queen of *Iberia*, *Arane*, had seign'd her self with child, and made use of *Gobrias's* Son to carry out the cheat. She afterwards proves truly with child, which came to be *Panthea*, durst not discover the first cheat, so that *Arbaces* (*Gobrias's* Son) became actually King, is made really so by marrying *Panthea*.

The rest is all *Episode*.

In this Fable appears some proportion, shape, and (at the first sight) an *outside* fair enough, yet at the bottom we hardly find what is more choice, or more *exquisite* and more
per-

perfect than History. By the turn of the *Plot*, if we look on *Arane*, this Play might have been call'd *The Deceiver Deceiv'd*, if we look on *Arbaces*, the title might have been *The Fortunate Impostor*, *The lucky Sham*, or something of that kind; which shows a want of that *good sense* in it which Tragedy requires.

There might have been feigned some right to the Crown long contested between the two families; (as ours of *Tork* and *Lancaster*) and bloody civil war ready to break out; when unexpectedly all grew hush and ended in a marriage; which (by a train long laid by *Gobrias*) took effect. This marriage should not have seem'd so advantageous to the false King, and his Father who brought it about; but by manifest reasons of *state* appear'd absolutely necessary for the good of the Kingdom. and above all things, desired and labour'd for by the relations of *Panthea*.

Whereas on the contrary, we find the Queen Mother attempting to poison

son this usurper, and see no reason to blame her endeavours.

What sets this *Fable* below History, are many *improbabilities*, and those of the worst sort ; because they contribute nothing to the wonder. What more improbable, than that the Mother whose business it was to contrive the death of the Impostor, should never caution or inform her only Daughter, who had the right to the Crown, that *Arbaces* was none of her Brother, but her vassal, and so obstruct her love for him ?

Nor is it likely that *Gobrias* should not have reserv'd some means to let his Son know the secret, that his Sons conduct and addresses to gain the Princess, might have been fashion'd accordingly.

The Characters are all *improbable* and *unproper* in the highest degree, besides that both these, their actions and all the *lines* of the Play run so wide from the *Plot*, that scarce ought could be imagin'd more contrary.

We blunder along without the least streak of light, till in the *last act* we
stumble

stumble on the *Plot*, lying all in a lump together ; neither any tolerable direction to guide us thither ; nor ought ingenious, just, or reasonable, that carries us from thence.

What find we in the Son of *Gobrias* that he must have the Princess and the Kingdom for her portion, save only that the Knave his Father will have it so ?

Take his picture sent before him, and drawn by a friend. -- *He is vain-glorious, and humble, and ingry, and patient, and merry, and dull, and joyful, and sorrowful, in extremity in an hour...* Should we find underwritten *This is a King*, yet could not reason give way to our belief.

Kings of Tragedy are all Kings by the Poets *Election*, and if such as these must be elected, certainly no *Polish* Diet would ever suffer Poet to have a voice in choosing a King for them. Nor will it serve that *Abaces* is not truly a King, for he is actually such, and intended for a true and rightful King before the Poet has done with him, what wants in Birth
the

the Poet should make up in his Merit, every one is to consent and wish him King, because the Poet designs him for one, 'tis (besides) observ'd that Usurpers generally take care to deserve by their conduct what is deny'd them by right.

We are to presume the greatest virtues, where we find the highest of rewards ; and though it is not necessary that all *Heroes* should be Kings, yet undoubtedly all crown'd heads by *Poetical right* are *Heroes*. This Character is a flower, a prerogative, so certain, so inseparably annex'd to the *Crown*, as by no Poet, no *Parliament* of Poets, ever to be invaded.

Arbaces indeed is of a different mould, he no sooner comes on the Stage, but lays about him with his tongue at so nauseous a rate, Captain *Bessus* is all Modesty to him, to mend the matter his friend shaking an empty skull, says *'Tis pity that valour should be thus drunk*. Had he been content to brag only amongst his own Vassals, the fault might be more sufferable, but the King of *Armenia*
is

is his prisoner, he must bear the load of all ; he must be swagger'd at, insulted over, and trampled on without any provocation. We have a *Scene* of his sufferings in each *Act* of the Play : *Bajazet* in the *Cage* was never so carried about, or felt half the barbarous indignities which are thrown on this unfortunate Prince by our monster of a King.

If the Poet would teach that victory makes a man insolent ; he must at the same time make victory blush, and fly to the other side ; as a just punishment for him that had abused her favours.

To the Queen-Mother his language is, *Plagues rot the adulterous Witch ! thou worse than Woman dam'd---strumpet---whore ! &c.* to his Father *Gobrias* ;

*Curses incurable, and all the evils
Man's body or his Spirit can receive,
Be with thee.*

To the Princess *Panthea* his supposed

posed Sister, after having cast her in Prison, and a thousand outrages very coarsly.

*Arb. I have beheld thee with a
lustful eye.*

*My heart is set on wickedness, to
act*

*Such sins with thee, as I have been
afraid*

*To think of. If thou dar'st consent
to this,*

*(Which I beseech thee do not) thou
mayst gain*

*Thy liberty, and yield me a con-
tent :*

*If not, thy dwelling must be dark
and close.*

These speeches, drawing his Sword at the Queen-Mother, and the other outrages, make the sum of our *Heroes* vertues, and neither worse nor better find we throughout his character. *Arbaces* should have been consider'd in a double capacity ; he should have been endu'd with all the greatness of mind, and generosity of
a King

a King, and also with the *modesty* of a Subject. The want of which, is a great aggravation of his faults; for his carriage towards the Royal Captive, towards the Queen-Mother, towards the Princess, as he was a King, were insupportable, as *no King*, it was all abominable. History sometimes takes notice of a certain *instinct* which has strangely hinder'd many unnatural actions. A Poet, I am sure, ought always to have that *instinct*, or some good *genius* ready to serve his *Heroe* upon occasion, to prevent these unpleasant *shocking* indecencies, which otherwise might happen. This *instinct* should in *Arbaces* have begot a respect to his Father *Gobrias*, and have humbl'd him in the presence of such as were truly of the *Blood Royal*.

And far from *decorum* is it, that we find the King *drelling* and quibbling with *Bessus* and his Buffoons, and worse, that they should presume to break their little jests upon him.

This too is *natural*, some will say. There are in nature many things which

which *Historians* are asham'd to mention, as below the dignity of an History : Shall we then suffer a *Tom Coriat* in Poetry ? Shall we on the most important day of a King's Reign, and at Court be content with such entertainment as is not above a Cocker's shop ? Might not a Poet as well describe to us how the King eats and drinks, or goes to *Stool* ; for these actions are also *natural* : but observe the behaviour of *Arbaces*, after that he is found to be *no King*. Now he will make amends, and give satisfaction to all he had wrong'd. To the Gentlemen about him.

Arb. Why do you keep your hats off; Gentlemen?

Is it to me? I swear it must not be.

Nay, trust me, in good Faith it must not be.

I cannot now command you, but I pray you,

For the respect you bear me, when you took

Me for your King, each man clap
F
On

*On his hat
At my desire.*

And surely the Captive King cannot but be content, when told that

*Arb. He shall go so home, as never
man went.*

Mardon. Shall he go on's head?

*Arb. He shall have Chariots easier
than air,*

*That I will have invented; and
ne'r think*

*He shall pay any ransom: And thy
self*

*That art the Messenger shalt ride
before him*

*On an Horse cut out of an intire
Diamond,*

*That shall be made to go with
golden Wheels.*

I know not how, yet.

For the Captive King's Mistress;

*Arb. She shall have some strange
thing; we'll have the Kingdom*

*Sold utterly, and put into a toy.
Which*

*Which she shall wear about her
carelessly
Somewhere or other.*

Now, that he is no King, nor has
ought to give, he is for selling all
without asking leave of the true So-
vereign *Panthea*. To her his Com-
pliment is,

Arb. Grant me one request.

*Pant. Alas, what can I grant you?
what I can, I will.*

*Arb. That you will please to marry
me.*

If I can prove it lawful.

Pant. Is that all?

*More willingly than I would draw
this air.*

X Should not rather the *Spirit* of
Majesty have now rouz'd up in the
Princess, and she have call'd to mind
his late brutish insolence, and have
call'd him impudent Slave, and dis-
charg'd a frown that should have
struck him dead, or commanded him
to be *nail'd* to the floor as *false* coin,

F 2

and

and a counterfeit stamp of Majesty. And certainly his *character* could deserve no better fate. But for his comfort, this Princess was none of those. One might swear she had a knock in the Cradle ; so soft she is at all points, and so silly. No *Linsey-woolsey* Shepherdess but must have more *soul* in her, and more sense of *decency* (not to say) honour. To this Vassal of hers, on her knees for half an hour together, she whines at this rate, *viz.*

Pan. *I know I am unworthy, yet
not ill*

*Arm'd, with which innocence I
here will kneel*

*Till I am one with earth ; but I
will gain*

*Some words, and kind ones, from
you.*

Thus she continues, and by and by he *kisses her thrice*, then calls her *Witch, Poisoner, Traitor*, sends her to Prison ; she thanks him with all her heart.

Pan.

*Nay, 'tis well the King is pleas'd
with it.*

At the next meeting she will needs be closer and closer to him ; he cannot keep her off him, he tells her he would commit *incest* with her : She returns a drawling, yawning, yielding answer ; and proceeds to tell him, that she wishes he were not her Brother, that she loves him so well, she can love no man else ; she shall weep her eyes out : and farther.

*Pan. But is there nothing else
That we may do, but only walk?
methinks
Brothers and Sisters lawfully may
kiss.*

Had *Panthea* been some *Wastcoat-ter* of the Village, that had been formerly *Complaisant* with him beyond discretion, more vile submissions she could not devise ; But as she is lawful *Sovereign*, nothing could be invented more opposite to all *bonesty*,
F ; *honour*.

honour, and decorum. If we consider them as Brother and Sister, 'tis horribly wicked. If we look on her as Sovereign, and him as her Subject, what can be more dishonourable? So that if *instinct* guided their love, as lawful and warrantable; it may be answer'd, that the same *instinct* should have prevented that love, as insolent and presumptuous in *Arbaces*, base and unbecoming in *Panthea*. For whether a Lady may better marry her Brother, or her Groom, is a question more easily decided in Divinity, than in Poetry.

We are let to know that the Queen-Mother was for removing the Usurper by poison, and for bringing all into the right channel agen. This we might expect to be a Woman *courageous*, and truly *Tragical*: yet we find her the veriest *patient Grissel* that ever had lain by a Monarch's side. She comes but thrice on the Stage; the first time she is rebuk'd by *Gebrias*, with the same language that the *Vicar of Newgate* might dispence to some *sinner* forlorn; then she is on
her

her *mary-bones* to the Impostor without reluctance. Lastly, when provok'd with a drawn Sword, and words more cutting, the proudest rant she could be rais'd to, was: -- *Fire consume me if ever I was a Whore.*

If nothing else in the character of *Arbaces*, the drawing his *Sword* against a *Woman*, was enough in Poetry to damn him. After that *outrage*, he could make no pretensions to ought that is good or honourable.

On this occasion memorable is that passage in *Virgil*, where *Æneas* after having related, how the Town on fire about his ears, -- on the sudden awak'd from his sleep, -- slung headlong by rage and despair, -- forsaken by his reason, -- his friends slaughter'd about him, -- the King *Priam* murder'd before his face: -- when he spies the cause of all this, *Hellen*, skulking in a corner -- at the sight of her.

*Exarsere ignes animo, subit ira
cadentem*

*Ulcisci patriam, & sceleratas su-
mere penas, &c.*

All which, with what follows, comes to no more, than had he said ; -- In that nick of time I even made a question within my self, whether I was not to take revenge on her ; to that degree of madness had my troubles wrought me.

*Talia jactabam, & furiata mente
ferebar.*

Now here, this revenge goes no farther than his thoughts ; these thoughts ---- *Aeneas* himself condemns, and calls them madness ; and is also sharply reprov'd for them by his *Guardian Angel*,

*Nite, quis indomitas tantus furor
excitat iras ?
Quid furis ?*

No man but *Virgil* could ever pen any thing with that infinite care and caution as is this particular passage. One might think *Virgil* foresaw whatever could be objected ; and provided against all scruples.

Yet

Yet of such a nice tast were the *Criticks* in that age of good sense; that *Varus* and *Tucca* struck out all the 22 Verses which contain this passage. These were employ'd by *Augustus* to inspect what (by the untimely death of *Virgil*) might have been left imperfect, and they durst not suffer these 22 lines to pass, though essential to the Poem; so tender they were, lest their *Heroe* might lye under a suspicion of transgressing in any *punctilio* of that nature.

We need not make a controversy whether *Virgil* or his *Criticks* be in the right: But if *Virgil* will not in a man allow the *thought* of striking a Woman in any circumstances, unless he condemns himself for that *thought*. And if his *Criticks* will not permit a *thought* of that kind with any *qualifications* whatsoever; then we may well conclude, that *Poetry* to be very gross, where the *men* both think, and speak, and act their *cruelties* against *Women*, without any shame or restraint.

But

But *Arbaces*, though mad, and flash'd upon by never so great a *burrian* of provocations, was not to be allow'd to think of striking ; because the Womans *quality* was above his, and made her sacred. Neither in this point is there a difference betwixt an *Epick Poem* and a *Tragedy* ; when the conclusion of both is *prosperous*.

As here, *Æneas*, a King, of great merit, by the assistance of Heaven, and his friends, after much labour, marries *Lavinia*.

And *Arbaces*, no King, of no merit, without friends in Heaven, or on the Earth ; without any trouble weds his King's only Daughter, and the Kingdom of *Iberia* is her portion.

I know with the Ancients, *Orestes* kill'd his Mother, *Hercules* his Wife and Children, *Agamemnon* his Daughter. But the first was an act of *Justice* ; the second of *Frenzy* ; the last of *Religion*. But these were all *Tragedies* unhappy in the *catastrophe*. And the business so well prepar'd ; that every one might see, that these
Worthies

Worthies had rather have laid violent hands on themselves, had not their *will* and choice been over-rul'd. Every step they made, appear'd so contrary to their inclinations, as all the while shew'd them unhappy, and render'd them the most *deserving* of pity in the World.

Another *Canker* in the heart of this *Tragedy*, is the incestuous love (for such it appears) between *Arbaces* and *Panthea*, I mean, the *conduct* of it. When any *design* on the *Stage* is in agitation, the Poet must take care that he engage the affections, take along the heart, and secure the good will of the Audience. If the *design* be wicked, as here the making approaches towards an *incestuous* enjoyment; the *Audience* will *naturally* loath and detest it, rather than favour or accompany it with their good wishes. 'Tis the sad effects and consequences of an ill *design* which the *Audience* love to have represented; 'tis then that the *penitence*, *remorse* and *despairs* move us: 'tis then that we grieve with the sorrowful,

ful, and weep with those that weep.

Therefore were the Ancients to make an *incestuous* love their subject; they would *take* it in the *fall*, as it rowls down headlong to desperation and misery.

Many in the *World* for their interest may comply and help forward the *advances* towards an ill action; but on the *Stage* there is no kindred nor filthy lucre to bias the *Audience*, or make them partial to the evil-doer. If the Poet observe not these measures, the *working up of a Scene*, is plainly the tormenting of nature, and holding our ears to the *Grindstone*.

For an incestuous love, famous amongst the Ancients, was the *tale* of *Macareus* and *Canace*. In the list of those Tragedies wherein *Nero* delighted to be an *Actor*, *Suetonius* reckons *Canace parturiens*. The title may satisfy us, that all the soft things, all the amours, the flowers and *fleurets* were over, e're the Offenders entred on the *Stage*.

In this last age a noble (*) *Italian* compos'd a Tragedy of *Canace* after the *model* of the Ancients; for the time of the *action*: he also chooses the day of *Canaces labour*. And then the pangs of child-bearing are the easiest that she suffers. For, to heighten the disgrace, this Poet feigns *Marcus* and *Canace* to be *Twins*, and this day to have been their birth day, which the King, their Father, is about to solemnize with a Festival. Immediately we find the two Offenders (under their apprehension of being discover'd) in the greatest confusion and despair imaginable. But that we might more justly pity them, he informs us, that their crime proceeded not from any folly or miscarriage in themselves which they might have avoided; but that a (†) *resistless power above*, and *Cœlestial force* had over-rul'd them: that indeed *Venus*

(*) *Speroni Sperone.*

(†) *Non malattia mortale,
Mà fa celeste forza
Non propria elezione,
Mà un impeto fatal. —*

had

had an old reck'ning with their *Father Æolus*, for persecuting her *Æneas*, and thus she discharg'd it with a *vengeance*.

By the rule of the Antients no colours, no sophistry or ribaldry's, were us'd to lessen a crime before it was committed: for then their Rhetorick could have no good effect, but must have *grated* on the hearers patience. But after the fact, when its punishment came heavy upon it, then all their art and invention was at work, to find out circumstances to extenuate the guilt, that the persons *guilty* might be capable of *pity*.

Arbaces in the dishonest love to his Sister, should have follow'd the example of that *Antiochus* in the History, who in love with his *Step-mother*, discover'd not his passion by any words or *gallantries*; but pin'd away, and gave himself over to dye; and had dy'd, if the dexterity of his Physitian had not by feeling his *Pulse* learnt the cause of his distemper.

The better to cleer this matter, I will trace the manners and conduct
of

of *Phedra* in *Euripides*, where we are told that *Hippolytus* having too rudely slighted the Altars of *Venus*, she is offended, and will have the whole Family feel the effects of her resentment. To bring this about, she strikes *Phedra* with a poison'd dart, and makes her in love with this *Hippolytus*, her Son in Law. *Phedra* conceals her love, strives to overcome it, not prevailing, resolves to (a) kill her self by fasting. And now for three days had she neither eat nor slept, when she first appears on the Stage. No wonder then if she talks very madly, she is in an hundred minds all at once, she tries all places and all postures, and is always uneasie in the present. Now her dress is a pain to her, and now she will be carry'd to her Closet and shut up close, instantly agen, she calls to have her locks tied back, and nothing but the garb of an *Amazon* will please her, then she would sleep in some grott, and drink the waters from a mossie foun-

(a) *ἑαυτὴν δ' ἐν ἀνίσταται σὺν.*

tain. Now she cries for the open air, for ranging the hills, for driving the woods, for whooping the dogs, for chasing the Stag, and brandishing a Javelin: and ah that the horses were ready to mount. Now she complains of her distraction, and blames some (b) Divine power; and now her face is loaded with shame, confusion and tears. Hide me (she cries) ah hide me from the world, it pains her (she says) to return to her right senses.

Here is a Scene of Madness, but not of Bedlam-madness; here is Nature, but not the obscenities, not the blind-sides of Nature, which are represented when *Arbaces* and *Panthea* go loose together, and whether of the two Madneses is the more apt to move pity, need not certainly be a question.

Hitherto cannot the Governess, Confident, or Nurse of *Phedra*, understand where *Phedra* is pincht. She sists, importunes and conjures her, yet

(b) *Ἐμὴν ἰσχυρὸν δαίμονος ἔργον.*

after all is no wiser till accidentally amongst other arguments whereby she would perswade *Phedra* to live, *Live*, says she, otherwise you betray your Children to be Lorded over by that other womans Bastard, this Amazon's Son, I mean *Hippolytus*, woes me, says *Phedra*, you have undone me ! name him no more. The Nurse proceeds to torture her with questions , and *Phedra* returns as many perplexed answers , till at the last says *Phedra*,

Phed. What is it that men call to be in love ?

Nurse. It is of all things the sweetest, and also the most bitter.

Phed. I have sufficiently experienc'd both.

Nurse. What says my Child, do you love any Man ?

Phed. Who is that same, that of the Amazon ?

Nurse. Say you *Hippolytus* ?

Phed. This from your self you bear, but not from me.

Alas ! undone ! intolerable, cries the Nurse, and she will not live one moment longer. And concludes that all, (even modest women too against their will) would be naught, and that Love is the veryest god almighty ; there is not the fellow of him in all the heavenly gang.

I have only cited the conclusion of this *Scene*, to note the utmost advances of *Phedra* towards a confession, the only crime of which she was guilty ; and to show that this Nurse (so long kept in ignorance) was no fool, but subtle and nimble enough to catch and run away with the least hint that could be offer'd.

In the former *Scene* all the conflict was between love and modesty ; this presents love and an active friendship join'd, both at once labouring to subdue this modesty, so far only as to extort a confession. The Nurse with wrung hands lies at *Phedra's* feet, embraces her knees, begs her to live, for her Childrens sake to live, and tell her pain. *Phedra* strives, would be from the Nurses hands, complains of
the

the violence, promises to tell, yet raves and rambles, speaks short and ambiguous, all is darkness; whilst every where tenderness, passion and modesty reign, and appear to admiration.

This *Scene* having wrought off the *Remains* of *Phedra's* frenzy, in the next she seems more calm, her mind more at ease, and now will move *pity* from a new *Topick*, for now this unfortunate Lady is found to be a woman of great sense and understanding. She reasons (to the Chorus) and wonders how humane life becomes so corrupt, for certainly (says she) it cannot be natural to do amiss, when we understand what is right. Yet thus it happens, we have before our eyes, and know what is good, but we practise otherwise. Some out of sloath, and others preferring a kind of pleasure before honesty; here be many pleasures of life, as conversation, ease a sweet evil, and modesty. Now there are two sorts of pleasure, one good, this other the bane of Families: but would this appear always in its true

colours, 'twould no longer be counted pleasure. These things when I consider'd, I thought no Philter could ever seduce me to act against my knowledge.

But to open my mind to you, after love had wounded me, I cast with myself how I might bear my illness the most decently, and from that time made it my care to hide my distemper and keep it to my self. Secondly, I resolv'd to get my right senses agen, and with chastity to overcome my frenzy. In the third place, if the attempt to cure my distemper prov'd vain, I then thought my best course would be to dye.

For I know the disease to be infamous, and especially in me a woman, odious to all people.

Then she curses those who first polluted the Marriage-bed. And hates the baggages that can talk so smoothly, and yet will do naughty things in a corner. (a) Blessed Lady, says she,

(a) Πᾶς τις ὁ δὲ Νύμφη πῶς καλῶς.

how

how can they look their husbands in the face? how can they but tremble at their (b) confederate darkness? and be afraid that the very (c) walls and doors should open and cry whore at 'um.

She concludes, Therefore dear friends, this same shall kill me, that I may never be taken to disgrace my Husband, and the Children I have brought forth.

The Nurse perceiving her Mistress thus resolute, sets her tongue a running to this purpose.

*Lady (quoth she) I was lately in a twittering fear for you,
But now I confess myself hen-hearted.*

It has been said, that second thoughts are the wisest.

And now (believe me) there is nothing singular,

(b) — τὴν συνάματον.

(c) — τίς τινα τ' ἔστιν.

Nothing unreasonable in your
case.

The truth is, the goddess is terrible
angry at you.

Well, you love? that's no mar-
vel.

And you would kill your self for
love.

That would be a pleasant pranck,
if all that are,

And that are to be in love must
presently take that course.

There is no striving,

No dodging with love, when it
comes in earnest.

'Tis easie to those that are yield-
ing.

But if you will be goodly, and think
high of your self,

If you will resist and be stub-
born,

Why, then there's no whoo with
it,

It shakes and breaks, and thunders
you to Atoms immediately.

Love is King of the air,

Whizz goes his power through the
blew seas,

And

And we are all of us his offspring.

They who have read the Chronicles,

Or are skill'd in antient Ballades,

Can tell us stories of Jupiter, Semele, Cephalus.

Of such love, and such wild lovers as you wou'd think strange at,

*Yet these Lovers (many of them) were * prefer'd in heaven,*

And now are waiting at gods elbow.

The gods melted with their sufferings, cou'd not be angry.

And now you will be in a fit.

You cannot be content with the same Laws,

With the same Nature, with flesh and blood, like other folks.

You should have been hatch'd in Jupiter's brain,

* ὅλλ' ἴμεν ἐν ἡμέρῃ

valet, ut phrygum cantibus dicit.

*And so been fram'd some blessed
Angel.*

*How many men who are right in
their senses,*

*See their bed tumbld yet walk on,
And lets it trouble their heads no
farther.*

*'Tis nine points of wisdom to keep
that secret,*

*Which would be no credit, when di-
vulg'd.*

*Perfection is an airy notion, never
to be found in practice.*

*Then surely they are well hop't up,
Who set themselves to live (a) ex-
actly.*

*As this world goes, if our good deeds
out-tell the bad,*

*We shall make an handsome reck'n-
ing.*

*Then, dear Child, be no longer in an
ill mind,*

*For the goddess has an heavy pique
against you.*

*And trust not that she will be
check-mated by you.*

(a) *anæstheticus.*

Nor

Nor think you to be higher than
the highest of all :

For such, in effect, is your last resolution.

And, to tell you plainly, 'tis an affront to 'em.

Then pluck up a good heart,
And love on ; since (b) God will
have it so.

You have a wound, cure your wound.
There are Spells, and Charms, and
(c) healing words,

Some remedy shall be found out for
you.

And truly, if we Women cannot
advise you,

The wit of man will come too late.

The Nurse here delivers all the good sense that could be proper for the occasion, as may be discern'd, notwithstanding the ill dress, in which I have disguis'd it. A less considering Poet would have displaid all this *dialogue-wise*, and made it a Scene of

(b) — *ὅς τις ἰσχυρὸς τῶν θεῶν.*

(c) — *λόγῳ διατρικῇ.*

mighty sputter. But *Euripides* would not suffer his *Phedra* so far to countenance or listen to these lewd reasons, as once to think they deserv'd any particular answer. To dispute in a matter of this kind, would have been the next door to the being convinc'd; and to contend, was to put her self in the way of being overcome. She therefore at once makes this return.

Ph. 'Tis thus that Towns and Kingdoms are destroy'd,
By a fair tongue and flattering
Speech decy'd:
We should not file our words to
please the ear;
But strike the mind, and kindle
glory there,

To make short, the Nurse tells her that wise sentences will not do the business: that, for her part, she would not be the minister of any ones pleasure: but in this extremity, where life is at stake, she might without blame for a violent disease, provide an extraordinary Cure. Phe-

Phedra calls these *horrible, filthy speeches*; and commands her to (*) *lock up her mouth.*

The Nurse urges that her words, if they are not clean, they are wholesome; and the preservation of life was of more importance than any proud name she would boast on in her death.

But she (finding that this sort of discourse did the more exasperate and provoke her Mistress) recants. *But* (says she) *now that it comes in my mind, I have at home (†) healing Philters that will work your Cure without touching upon your modesty.*

Phedra is in fear, makes scruples, asks questions; which the Nurse evades, and tells her, *she wanted not to be instructed, but to be assisted.*

In the next Scene *Phedra* is on the Stage, and over-hears the Nurse within, exchanging some words with *Hippolytus*: whereupon she cries out,

(*) ὅτι ἀκαταίστητος ὁμιλία

(†) ἔχω καὶ ἐνὶ οἴκῳ φίλτρα καὶ διαλύσιν.

says,

says, she is betraid, curses the Nurse, and resolves to kill her self. And now the apprehensions that *Hippolytus* would accuse her to his father, made her write a Letter, laying all the blame on *Hippolytus*, as the best expedient (that amidst her distractions, she could on the sudden devise) to secure her honour, and to prevent the disgrace of her Family, and of her Children: and with this Letter in her hand, she hangs her self.

Had some Author of the last age given us the character of *Fledra*, they (to thicken the Plot) would have brought her in burning of Churches, poisoning her Parents, prostituting her self to the Grooms, soliciting her Son face to face, with all the importunity and impudence they could imagin; and never have left dawbing so long as there might remain the least cranny for either *pitty* or *probability*. They would never have left her, till she had swell'd to such a *Toad*, as nothing but an audience of brass could sit the sight of her.

But (for our credit) *Seneca*, before us,

us, in this *blind* way of *designing* made no inconsiderable progress. We find his *Phedra* at the first dash justifying her *incestuous* love: and her Nurse is the Woman of *sentences*; who labours with all the wholesome advice, the sense and nonsense she could scrape together, to *maul* this monstrous lust that rag'd in her Nursling, *Phedra*. And whilst she goes on without any signs of success, *Phedra* surprises her, (on the sudden) resolving to *dye* with a good name. Whereupon the Nurse bids her be patient, and promises to try what she can do with the young man.

Without more words, the next *Scene* presents us *Phedra*, (as if the late resolution had never been made) all upon the *gallantry*, she is tricking her self up in *Masquerade*; and thus she hopes to win the Salvage *Hippolytus*, and the Nurse and she make their supplications to the Goddess of *Chastity* to help on their design. And now it is that the Nurse attacks him: but how? she expounds to him at large, that a *City-life* and *Women* are
a com-

a comfortable *importance* ; he answers in another *barangue*, that nothing is like to the *ranging* in the Countrey : and truly (for *Women*) he hates them all mortally. During this conference, *Phedra* reels in amongst them, falls in a swoon ; and well is it for her that she is taken up in the arms of her beloved Son : therefore she takes heart, and puts it to him couragiously. But words proving vain, she will needs (a) *ravish* the poor stripling. Here-upon, to cut her neck off, he draws out the brown *faulcheon*, (b) on which she laying her sweaty palms, he cries *soh!* flings it from him, and runs away. And now the Nurse puts in her word, and says, *marry*, 'tis the best way to be before-hand with him, and to cry *Whore* first. Accordingly they fly to *Theseus*, *Phedra* tells him that *Hippolytus* not only purposed, but had (c) effected his filthy pur-

(a) *Etiam in amplexus ruit ?*
Stringatur ensis.

(b) *Contactus ensis deferat castum latus.*

(c) *Veni tamen corpus tulit.*

pose upon her body, do she what she could: and *ecce signum* shews the Sword to witness for her truth. Here-upon *Theseus* dispatches his Son *Hippolytus* into another World. And now (with a canker to her) comes *Phedra*, confesses the truth indeed, and kills her self.

Now in this *Phedra* of *Seneca*, what one occasion of *pitty* have we? what ground for *terror*? and, above all, what *manners* have we? ask the generality of Women if they are mov'd and concern'd, if their hearts and good will go along and attend the thoughts and motions of this *Phedra*? will they not answer that they know no such Woman, that she is no way a kin to them, nor has any resemblance with their nature? She must be some brat of a *Succubus*, or an evil *Spirit*, (say they) that personates a Woman; or some *Devil* in a *Machine*, that comes to render the Sex odious. Nor can they allow her more compassion than to a Bitch, or *Polecat*, and what has no relation to human shape.

Nor

Nor can this be a cause of *terror*: for few Women would be apt to fancy that they could (in any circumstances) be so wicked as this *Phedra*. Each will say, were it my fate, or should I be curst to love where I ought not, I would certainly conceal my love, and strive with it, my thoughts, words, and actions, and all, my condition might be every way the same, or very like to that of *Phedra* in *Euripides*. But I could never speak or act at this impudent abominable rate, could never be transform'd to such a monster as this *Phedra* of *Seneca*. And since my conduct would not be the same, my case can never be the same; and consequently this *example* cannot move or concern, or have any operation to stir either *pitty* or *terror* in me.

I have been the more large on this matter, because it may serve as a certain and general *test*, whereby may be discover'd what is *naturally* apt to move *pitty* or *terror*. And this is founded on a Philosophy never contraverted, but alike current at *Malmsbury* as at *Athens*. Eve-

Every one have noted *Seneca* for his *unnatural* way of writing. Yet, besides what is already observ'd in his *characters*, I cannot leave him, without reminding you, that though he takes all his *thoughts* from *Sophocles* and *Euripides*, yet he rarely affords us any of their *good sense*. He crumbles every *thought* into all the little *points* that ever he can strain it to; and all these *points* (for, or against him, it matters not) must one way or other be apply'd.

Whensoever he finds a *Diamond*, he forces, and breaks it into an hundred pieces; never letting it rest so long as any of it will *sparkle*. I desire your patience but for one instance of this kind.

In the *Scene* where the *Nurse* presses to know what it is that pains her Mistress; amongst her other ravings, says *Phedra* in *Euripides*.

(a) *What sort of love lov'st thou,
ah wretched Mother?*

(a) ὦ τάλαν, τίς μὲν ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγάπη

H

And

*And thou, unhappy Sister, Wife of
Bacchus ?*

The third unhappy, I.

The Poet made *Phedra* say this, not only, as a proper and *natural* reflection, that these extravagant loves run in the blood ; but as a *hint* of her disease, and withal so *qualifi'd*, as might also shew her *modestly* : for she puts less in the *conclusion* than was in the *premisses*. She *concludes* to the *unhappiness* only, and does not (as she might) say.

And now the third unhappy Lover, I.

We find *Seneca* baiting this *thought* six several times in one *Scene*, and we have at least, 40 lines in the Tragedy all meer *descant* upon it.

Ph. *Fatale* (a) *miserae matris ag-
nosco malum,*
*Peccare noster novit in sylvis a-
mor, &c.*

Phed

Ph. Aut quis juvare. (b) *dædalus*
flammas queat, Sc.

Nat.----- (c) *Quid domum infamem*
gravas

Superasq; matrem?

Nat. (c) *Memorq; matris metue*
concubitus novos.

Nu. *Cur monstra cessant? aula cur*
fratris vacat?

Prodigia toties orbis insueta au-
diet,

Natura toties legibus cedat suis,

Quoties Amabit Cressa?

Nu. *Patris memento: Ph. (d) Me-*
minimus matris simul.

Nu. *Adoritq; genitor. Ph. Mstis*
(f) Ariadnz pater.

Hipp. *O majus ausa matre mon-*
strifera malum,

Genetrice peior! illa se tantum stu-
pro

Contaminavit, & tamen tacitum
diu

Crimen bisformi partus exhibuit
nota;

Scelvsq; matris arguit vultu truci
Ambiguus infans; ille te venter
tulit.

Ph. Aut quis Cressius
 (c) *Dadalea vasto Clausura mu-*
gita replens
Taurus biformis, ore Cornigero se-
rox
Divulsu ?

The thought in *Euripides* was good and just enough ; but here we have it half'd, and pull'd, and tost, and tumbl'd about, in all postures and figures, and in all colours but the right. Observe but how a *a* *propes* the *Heroine* first starts it. No wonder (says she) if my love goes to the (a) wood, seeing my Mother was gallanted by a Bull ; this brings her the ready way to (b) *Dadalus* and the *Labyrinth*, where both she and the Poet are lost together. One might think, it would well enough serve from the Nurses mouth for an (c) use of reproof : till shortly after we find it a (d) *turn-coat*, and muster'd up by *Phedra* in the way of an excuse. The rest are all wide from sense and sobriety, as (e) the huge bellows that fill'd the *Dadalian Cloysters*.

This

This may suffice for *Seneca*, and *Phedra*, with whom I had not so long digress'd, but that I had *Panthea* in mine eye all the while. Nor should I have judg'd *Panthea* worth all this ado, but that she has many proper Cousins on the Stage. And these vile characters have so long prosper'd, that they bear high, and are fairly on to pass for excellencies.

But I grow weary of this Tragedy : In the former I took *Latorch* by his mouth, and ranting air for a copy of *Cassius* in *Shakespear* : and that you may see *Arbaces* here, is not without his *Cassian* strokes.

Thus *Cassius* in *Shakespear*.

Cass. ---- Brutus and Cæsar ! what
should there be in that Cæsar !

Why should that name be sounded
more than yours ?

Write them together, yours is as
fair a name :

Sound them ; it doth become the
mouth as well :

Weigh them, it is as heavy; con-
 jure with them, man :
 Brutus will start a Spirit as well
 as Cæsar.
 Now, in the name of all the Gods
 at once,
 Upon what meat doth this our Cæ-
 sar feed,
 That he is grown so great ? ---

Thus *Arbaces*.

Arb. I have liv'd
 To conquer men, and now am over-
 thrown
 Only by words, Brother and Sister :
 where
 Have those words dwelling ? I will
 find 'em out,
 And utterly destroy 'em : but they
 are
 Not to be grasp'd : let 'em be men
 or beasts,
 I will cut 'em from the earth ; or
 Towns,
 And I will raze 'em, and then blow
 'em up :

Let

*Let 'em be Seas, and I will drink
 'em off,
 And yet have unquench'd fire with-
 in my breast :
 Let 'em be any thing but meerly
 voice.*

Would not these raptures have put
 Sir Will. Petty in mind of the Irish
 Inscription ?

FOR FIERCENESS AND
 FOR FURIOUSNESS,--

MEN CALL ME THE QUEENS
 MORTER-PIECE.

The business of the
Maids Tragedy is this;

A Mintor contracted to Aspatia (Callianax's Daughter) by the King's command, marries Evadne, Sister to Melanthius; and expects to lye with her; but the Bride (minding nothing) flatly tells him that he is but taken for a Cloak; that She, indeed, is a Bedfellow only for the King. The good man is perswaded to dissemble all, till his friend Melanthius extorts from him the secret: and thereupon hectors his Sister Evadne into repentance, and makes her promise to murder the King. Which she effects: in the mean time, by vexing Callianax, Melanthius prevails with him to deliver up the Fort, (wherein consisted the strength of the Kingdom,) and so provides for his own security. Lysimachus, Brother

ther to the murder'd King, succeeds on the Throne, and pardons all. Evadne would now go to bed with her Husband, he refuses, she kills her self. Aspatia in mans habit kicks her Sweetheart Amintor, duels him, and is kill'd; and now Amintor kills himself to follow her: at which sight, his friend Melanthius would also take the same course, but is prevented.

Here we find *Amintor* false to his Mistress; and this fault is the source of all the revolutions in this Tragedy.

Amintor therefore should have named the Tragedy, and some additional title should have hinted the Poet's design.

But seeing the *Maid* comes in at the latter end, only, to be kill'd for company; and seeing the King is the person of greatest importance, is the greatest loser and concern'd in the action of the Play more than enough. And seeing that the new King *Lyfismachus* in the close of the Tragedy makes this sober conclusion, says he;

May

*May this a fair example be to
 me,
 To rule with temper : for on lust-
 ful Kings
 Unlookt-for sudden deaths from hea-
 ven are sent.
 But curst is he that is their in-
 strument.*

From these considerations we might gather that the Poets intent was to show the dismal consequences of *fornication*. And if so, then the Title of the Tragedy should have related to the King.

Whil'st thus we are uncertain what ought to be the *title*, we may suspect that the *Action* of the Tragedy is *double*, where there seem two centers, neither can be right ; and the lines leading towards them must all be false and confus'd ; the *preparation* I mean, and conduct must be all at random, since not directed to any one certain end.

But what ever the Poet design'd ; nothing in *History* was ever so *unnatural*,

tural, nothing in *Nature* was ever so *improbable*, as we find the whole conduct of this Tragedy, so far are we from any thing accurate, and Philosophical as Poetry requires.

This will appear as we examin the particular actions and Characters apart.

Our Poet here gives to the great Comical *Booby Callianax*, the honour of a long name with a King at th'end on't, yet lets the King himself go without. But since he must be nameless we may treat him with the greater freedom, and to tell my mind, certainly God never made a King with so little wit, nor the devil with so little grace, as is this King *Anonymous*.

A King of History might marry his Concubine to another man for a Maid; might hinder that man from the enjoyment. But would not then turn them into the bed-chamber to be all night together; nor would come in the morning to interrogate and question him, and torture the soul of him, as we find in this Tragedy,
nor

nor would impose it on a husband thus affronted, whom he call's *honest* and *valiant*, to be the pimp to his bride. To have taken *Amintors* head off had been clemency in comparison of these outrages without any cause or colour. And how wise the King was in all this, may be judg'd from his own mouth, finding the husband contented and all quiet, the King (jealous that *Evadne* had not observ'd covenants) thus taxes her.

*Do not I know the uncontrolled
thoughts*

*That youth brings with him, when
his blood is high*

*With expectation and desire of
that*

*He long had waited for? is not his
spirit*

*Though he be temperate of a valiant
strain,*

*As this our age has known? what
could he do,*

*If such a sudden speech had met
his blood,*

But

*But ruine thee for ever? if he had
not kill'd thee,
He could not bear it thus; he is
as we.
Or any other wronged man.*

As if she had said, you have *Evad-*
ne, you have broken Articles with
me; it cannot be otherwise; for had
you kept them, flesh and blood could
not endure the affront, and he is such
a man as would have cut us all to
pieces in revenge. The danger being
so clear and certain, and a thousand
safe courses before his nose, why
should he stumble on this? never was
a King of History so errant a fool and
madman.

In framing a Character for Trage-
dy, a Poet is not to leave his reason,
and blindly abandon himself to fol-
low fancy; for then his fancy might
be monstrous, might be singular and
please no body's *maggot* but his own,
but reason is to be his guide, reason is
common to all people, and can never
carry him from what is Natural.

Many are apt to mistake *use* for
nature,

nature, but a Poet is not to be an Historiographer, but a Philosopher, he is not to take *Nature* at the *second hand*, soyl'd and deform'd as it passes in the customes of the unthinking vulgar.

The (a) *Phedra* in *Euripides* told us truly that it is *not Natural to do evil when we know good*. Therefore Vice can never please unless it be painted and dress'd up in the colours and disguise of vertue, and should any man knowingly and with open eyes prefer what is evil, he must be reckon'd the (b) greatest of Monsters, and in no wise be lookt on as any image of what is Natural, or what is suitable with humane kind.

What is there of the *Heroe*, of Man, or of Nature in these Kings of our Poets framing? And for *Evadners*

(a) *ἡ φύσις δὲ κατὰ τὴν ἀρετὴν οὐκ ἐπὶ τὸ κακὸν κινεῖται.*

(b) *—majus est monstro nefas
Nam monstra fato, moribus scelera imparet.*

Sen;

part;

part, did Hell ever give reception to such a Monster? or *Cerberus* ever wag his tayl at an impudence so sacred?

On the Wedding night the Bridegroom is cajol'd by her in no better terms than.

Evad. A mayden-head, Amintor, at my years?

Alas, Amintor, thinkest thou I forbear

To sleep with thee, because I have put on

A Mayden strictness; look upon these cheeks

And thou shalt find the hot and rising blood

Unapt for such a vow; no, in this heart

There dwells as much desire, and as much will

To put that wish't act in practice, as ever yet

Was known to woman, and they have been shown

Both; but it was the folly of thy youth,

To

To think this beauty (to what kind
so e're

It shall be call'd) shall stoop to any
second.

I do enjoy the best, and in that
height

Have sworn to stand or dye.

Soon after she tells him.

Alas I must have one

To Father Children, and to bear the
name

Of husband to me, that my sin may
be

More honourable.

Hitherto she is bashful, after this
the Scene is to be wrought up, and
the next Scene presents her impu-
dence triumphant; but I shall trace
her duty towards her husband no far-
ther.

Had *Evadne* been the injur'd bo-
dies sister, and had marry'd *Aminor*
out of revenge, or had their been any
foundation from circumstances for
this sort of carriage, the Character
then might have been contriv'd plau-
sible enough; but both the Kings
be-

behaviour and hers, uncircumstanc'd
as we have them, are every way so
harsh and against Nature, that every
thing said by them strikes like a dag-
ger to the souls of any reasonable au-
dience.

Whatever persons enter upon the
Stage the Poetry would be gross e-
nough if the audience could not by
the *manners* distinguish in what
Country the *Scene* lay ; whether in
England, Italy, or Turkey : more gross
would it be if the manners would not
discover which were men and which
the women.

Now Nature knows nothing in the
manners which so properly and par-
ticularly distinguishes woman as doth
her modesty, consonant therefore to
our principles and Poetical, is what
some writers of Natural History have
reported ; that women when drown-
ed swim with their faces down-
wards, though men on the contra-
ry.

Tragedy cannot represent a woman
without modesty as natural and essen-
tial to her.

If a woman has got any accidental historical impudence, if documented in the School of *Nanna* or *Heloisa*, she is furnish'd with some stock of acquired impudence, she is no longer to stalk in Tragedy on her high shoes; but must rub off and pack down with the Carriers into the *Providence* of Comedy, there to be kickt about and expos'd to laughter.

There are degrees of modesty. *Evadne* and every person feign'd ought to be represented with more modesty then *Phedra* or *Semiramis*, because the History makes it credible that these had less of modesty then Naturally is inherent to the Sex, yet ought these also to show more of modesty then is ordinarily seen in men, that the Characters might still be distinguish'd.

But (of all) the Kings murder is attended with those circumstances, with such a knot of absurdity and injustice, that I don't well know where to begin to unravel it.

This King indeed is born a Monster, a Monster of great hopes, and what

what might we not have expected from him? yet certainly the Poet cuts him off, e're ripe for punishment.

And by such unproper means, that to remove one guilty person he makes an hundred; and commits the *deadly* sins to punish a *venial* one.

If *Aminors* falshood and its fatal consequences are to be noted, what occasion have we for a King in this Tragedy? cannot *Corydon* deceive his *Amarillis* (for such is *Alpatia*) but the King must know of it, the King must be murder'd for't?

To vex this false man, a Groom might have done the job, and have been the Poets Cuckold-maker to all intents and purposes every jot as well.

If it be said that the King was necessary to the falshood, I question whether in Poetry a King can be an accessory to a crime, if the King commanded *Aminor*; *Aminor* should have begg'd the Kings pardon; should have suffer'd all the racks and tortures

a Tyrant could inflict; and from *Perrillus's* Bull should have still bellowed out that eternal truth, that his *Promise was to be kept*, that he is true to *Aspatia*, that he dies for his Mistress, then would his memory have been precious and sweet to after-ages; and the Midsummer-Maydens would have offer'd their Garlands all at his grave.

And thus the King might kill *Aminator*, but *Aminator* could not pretend that the King or Fortune had made him false.

--- *nec nisi miserum fortuna Si-*
nonem
Finxit, vanum etiam mendacemque
improba finget.

Therefore, I say, the King was not to blame; or however not so far, as in any wise to render his life obnoxious.

But if the Poet intended to make an example of this King, and that the King right or wrong must be kill'd. *Aminator* only felt the highest provocations,

cations, and he alone should have been drawn out for the wicked instrument, for *Mekintius* had no reason to be angry at any but at his Sister *Evadne*; nor could she have any pretence to exercise her hands, unless it were against her self.

If I mistake not, in Poetry no woman is to kill a man, except her quality gives her the advantage above him, nor is a Servant to kill the Master, nor a Private Man, much less a Subject to kill a King, nor on the contrary.

Poetical decency will not suffer death to be dealt to each other by such persons, whom the Laws of Du-el allow not to enter the lists together.

There may be circumstances that alter the case, as when there is a sufficient ground of partiality in an *Audience*, either upon the account of *Religion* (as *Rinaldo*, or *Riccardo* in *Tasso* might kill *Soliman*, or any other *Turkish* King or great *Sultan*) or else in favour of our *Country* for then a private *English* Heroe might over-

come a King of some Rival Nation.

But grant that *Evadne* lies under none of all these impediments; suppose her duly qualifi'd, and let the King wave his priviledges. Is there in History any president of a *Magdalen* sinner, that meerly from a fit of repentance sell soul on her *Gallant* at this horrid rate. Indeed, amongst 'em, they call him *lustful Thief*, *Devil-King*, *shameless Villain*, &c. the *Athenian* Servants were better bred.

(a) ὦ μῦθε, εἰ γὰρ δούλον εἶμι τίς.

Ah fool; if we may term our Masters so.

ὦ αὖτις μὲν δούλον εἶμι τίς.

Death take him! no, he is my Master.

But I say, what reason is there for all this outcry? What can she lay to the King's charge?

(a) Euripides.

Thou

*Thou kept'st me brave at Court,
 and Whor'd me ;
 Thou marri'd me to a young noble
 Gentleman,
 And whor'd me still.*

The noble Gentleman indeed is wrong'd : but, good Madam, what reason is there for you to complain ? did any force or philter overcome you ? was not you as forward ? did not you freely and heartily consent ? do not we remember your *hot rising blood*,

*--- Your much desire, and as much
 will
 To put that wisb'd act in practise,
 as ever yet
 Was known to Woman ?*

Has the King cast you off ? or broken articles ? no : but you repent ? then repent at home ; you may make bold with your own body, and there let fly your rage and violence. For to kill your Lover, is no effect or opera-

tion of repentance, nor has any ground in nature or reason : 'tis worle than brutish.

But indeed most of our Murderers hitherto have been no better ; they are the Poets Ban-dogs let loose to worry those the Poet had mark'd out for slaughter ; and never shew more reason or consideration : and consequently can in no wise occasion either pitty or terror to cause that delight expected from Tragedy.

In *Epick Poetry* enemies are kill'd ; and *Mezentius* must be a wicked Tyrant ; the better to set off *Æneas's* piety. In Tragedy, all the clashing is amongst friends, no *panegyrick* is design'd, nor ought intended but pitty and terror : and consequently no shadow of sense can be pretended for bringing any wicked persons on the Stage. And yet in that *Mezentius* of *Virgil*, we find more vertue than in all the characters I have yet examin'd ; and greater occasion for pitty. We forget all his cruelties, when we see that trouble and infinite passion for his Son *Lausus*, (who was slain

slain in his defence, and whom he would not survive,) which is so admirably express'd.

-----*Æstuat ingens*

*Imo in corde pudor, mistoq; insania
luctu,*

*Et furiis agitatus amor, & conscia
virtus, &c.*

Which lines, *Tasso* (who translates the whole passage under the names of *Solimano* and *Amiralto* into his *Gerusalemme*) thus renders in more words, but not with more advantage.

*Ferue in mezzo del cor lo sdegno e
l'onta,*

*E co'l lutto la rabbia e mista in-
fieme,*

E da le furie l'agitato amore,

E noto a se medesimo l'empio valore.

But to return, what yet makes this fact of *Evadne* more unlikely, is, that she should be hector'd into a repentance so pernicious, by her Brother

ther *Melantius* : who is said to be noble and brave ; but from his own mouth we may judg him a *Heroe*, like those we met with formerly ; all his words are brags ; no *Dangerfield*, nor Captain *Thundergun* could sit neer him. And for his manners, aiter one King was murder'd by his contrivance, he stands on his guard, and takes up the next King thus roundly.

Mel. *The short is this,*
'Tis no ambition to list up my
self,
Urges me thus : I do desire a-
gain
To be a Subject, so I may be
freed ;
If not, I know my strength, and
will unbuild
This goodly Town ; be speedy and
be wise
In a reply.

And now this new King, Brother to the former, as *heroickly* throws him a *blank*, and bids him make his

OWN

own terms. His words are these :

Lif. Melanthius, *write in that thy
choice ;
My Seal is at it.*

And more to the purpose we find not (in the Tragedy) of this second King ; save only when he concludes the Play, and tells us, that he (for his part) will take warning how ever he meddles with a Woman ; as before has been cited.

Callianax is an old humorous Lord, neither *wise* nor *valiant*, as himself confesses ; and yet is entrusted with the strength and keys of the Kingdom : whereas, in Comedy, he would scarce pass for a good Yeoman of the Cellar.

His Daughter, *Aspatia*, that gives name to this Tragedy, makes also here a very simple *figure*. Never did *Amintas* or *Pastor fido* know any thing so tender ; nor were the *Arcadian* Hills ever water'd with the tears of a creature so innocent. Pretty Lamb ! how mournfully it bleats ! it
needs

needs no *articulate* voice to move
our compassion : it seeks no shades
but under the *dismal* Yew ; and brow-
ses only on *Willow-garlands* : yet it
can speak for a kiss or so.

Asp. I'll trouble you no more, yet I
will take
A parting kiss, and will not be de-
ny'd.
You'l come, my Lord, and for the
Virgins weep
When I am laid in earth ; though
you your self
Can know no pitty. Thus I wind
my self
Into this Willow garland, &c.

At this rate of tattle she runs on,
and never knows when she has said
enough.

This *Aspatia* is a Lord's Daughter,
and bred at Court ; yet is in the pre-
sence, and in the Bed-chamber of the
Lady that supplants her, and amongst
the Bride-maids, where she acts her
part ; and fawns upon the perjur'd
man that forsakes her. And now
can-

cannot I be perswaded that there is ought of nature or probability in all this. Much less would I think this a Woman to handle a Sword, and kick *Amintor*, as we see her do soon after. Nor can I conceive wherein consists that *blissing*, as she calls it; which she propos'd to her self, in being kill'd by his hands. This may be *Romance*, but not *Nature*.

And certainly, of all the characters, this of *Amintor* is the most unreasonable. No reason appears why he was contracted to *Aspatia*, and less why he forsook her for *Evadne*; and least of all for his dissembling, and bearing so patiently the greatest of provocations that could possibly be given. Certainly no spectacle can be more displeasing, than to see a man ty'd to a post, and another buffetting him with an immoderate tongue. Certainly nothing can please a generous mind better, than that of *Virgil*.

Parcere subjectis, & debellare superbos.

Poetry will allow no provocation or injury, where it allows no revenge. And what pleasure can there be in seeing a King threaten and hector without cause; when none may be suffer'd to make a return? Poetry will not permit an affront, where there can be no reparation. But well was it for us all, that *Amintor* was by the Poet his *maker*, endu'd with a restraining grace, and had his hands ty'd.

The King should first have kill'd his own Mother to have made him mad enough, and fitted him for such a monstrous provocation. And *Amin-tor* too should have been guilty of some enormous crime, (as he is indeed) that drew this curse upon him, and prepar'd him to receive so horrid an out-rage. Both should have been ripe for punishment, which this occasion pulls down upon them, by making them kill each other. Then *Poetical Justice* might have had its course, though no way could pity be due to either of them.

But .

But surely this character of *Amin-tor* is (a) inconsistent, and is contradiction all over. He is a man of *Honour*, yet breaks his Faith with his Mistress, bears the greatest of affronts from his Wife that ever was given, and dissembles it. 'Tis true; once or twice he is for singing a *Catch*, for the Fiddle and Dancing; but his countenance is not always set after that copy; he does not always dissemble *scurvily*: for sometimes we have him looking so pleas'd, that Comedy would almost be asham'd of such a Cuckold.

He is also honest, and of unshaken loyalty; yet sometimes has such devilish *throws*, as would afright any true *liege* people from sitting at a Coffee-house near him.

And all the *passions* in him work so aukwardly, as if he had *suck'd a Sow*. Thus he threatens.

Am. ---- *Come to my bed, or by those
hairs,*

(a) — *Servetur ad imum
Qualis ab incepto processerit, & sibi constet:*
(Which

(Which, if thou hadst a Soul like to thy locks,

Were threads for Kings to wear about their arms :

Evad. Why so perhaps they are.)

Am. I'll drag thee to my bed.--

Should not he rather have kick'd her out of doors ? And did ever man huff with such a *parenthe-sis* ?

As the *Scene* and provocations work higher ; what *Alpatia* might have said to him, he whines to *Evadne*.

Am. What a strange thing am I ?

Evad. A miserable one, one that my self am sorry for.

Am. Why shew it then in this, If thou hast pitty, though thy love is none :

Kill me, and all true Lovers that shall live

In after-ages, crost in their desires,

Shall bless thy memory, and call thee good,

Be-

*Because such mercy in thy heart
was found
To rid a lingring Wretch.*

Amintor lov'd *Aspatia*, and mar-
ri'd *Evadne*, only because the King
commanded him. We heard nothing
of his love to *Evadne* till now, that
he is turn'd the amorous *Ows*, when
he ought to be all rage and indigna-
tion.

When he should be silenc'd, he falls
a preaching.

Am. *Oh thou hast nam'd a word
that wipes away
All thoughts revengful ; in that
sacred name
The King, there lies a terror ;
what frail man
Dares lift his hand against it ; let
the gods
Speak to him when they please ;
till then let us suffer and wait.*

This is loyal breath ; but present-
ly comes a puff that drives us back
to the North of *Scotland*.

K

Am,

Am. ---- *And it is some ease
To me in these extremes, that I
knew this
Before I touch't thee ; else had all
the sins
Of mankind stood betwixt me and
the King,
I had gone through 'em to his heart
and thine.*

Oh, says he, 'tis well its no worse,
for had I lain with thee, I should have
been all fire and fury ; I would not
have valu'd twenty Kings, but have
kill'd 'em all. Well *Amintor, de gusti-
bus non est disputandum*, there is dif-
ference betwixt men and men ; some
one, peradventure, of a grosser sense,
might have been as cool and well
content, if he had been permitted
the honour to *touch* for once where
his Majesty had toucht before. But
now the storm is over, and he pro-
ceeds,

Am. ---- *Give me thy hand,
Be careful of thy credit, and sin
close,*

'Tis

'Tis all I wish; upon my Chamber-floor

I'll rest to night, that morning visitors

May think we did as married people use,

And pray thee smile upon me when they come,

And seem to toy, as if thou hadst been pleas'd

With what we did. Evad. Fear not, I will do this.

Am. Come let us practise, and as wantonly

As ever loving Bride and Bridegroom met,

Let's laugh and enter here. Evad. I am content.

Am. Down all the swellings of my troubled heart,

When we walk thus entwin'd, let all eyes see,

If ever Lovers better did agree.

See how he concludes too, to the eternal disgrace of *Rhime*. One might think that a man in his predicament should scarce be in a mood to be so

very particular, and enlarge thus upon the subject, unless he were well pleas'd with the occasion. Besides, we find here, *Lovers, entic'd, laugh, Bridegroom, Bride, loving, wantonly, pleas'd, toy, prethee, did as married people use*; so many pleasant words and pretty, got together, *Longinus* would swear that no man could be angry at heart with all these in his mouth; they ought none of them to be nam'd on the same day with *Evadne*, and the transactions in this *Tragedy*. What I have cited, is only from the *first Scene*, wherein *Amin-tor* has business; nor would I follow him farther, but that in the third *Act*, betwixt him and *Melantius* we find the first occasion for a Tragical passion that yet (I think) these *Plays* have afforded us; which arises from the conduct of an Husband who discovers the secret of his Wives dishonour to his Friend her Brother. *Melantius* importunes *Amin-tor* to tell the cause of his trouble. When the matter comes to be broken, they proceed thus:

Mel.

Mel. ----*What is it ?*

Am. *Why 'tis this, --it is too big
To get out, let my tears make way
awhile.*

Here I suppose, *Aminor* might
better have wept, without telling it
to *Melantius*.

Mel. *Punish me strangely Heaven,
if he escape
Of life or fame, that brought this
Trough to this.*

Am. *Your Sister.*

Mel. *Well said.*

Am. *You'd wish't unknown, when
you have heard it.*

Mel. *No.*

Amint. *Is much to blame,
And to the King has given her Ho-
nour up---*

This line at the full length, is surely enough, his care is, so to mince that matter as not to offend the Brother. Some broken speeches, as *your Sister, the King, her honour, or*

the like, with now and then a sprinkling of his tears, might have suffic'd, and the Brother should have been left to guess and paraphrase the broad meaning. But *Aminor* harps upon the same string out of time himself. What follows, is plainly to upbraid and affront his Friend by words, though he intended nothing less; for he goes on:

Am. And lives in whoredom with him.

And what yet is more silly, in the next he adds,

*Am. She's wanton, I am loath to
say a whore,
Though it be true.*

This provokes *Melintius* to draw his Sword, and he is for fighting *Aminor*; yet I am apt to be of *Aminor's* mind, which he thus expresses:

Am. --It was base in you,

To

To urge a weighty secret from your
Friend,
And then rage at it.

Yet *Melantius* persists, till *Amin-
tor* is provoked to draw his Sword,
and then *Melantius* puts up. *Harle-
quin* and *Scaramouche* might do these
things. Tragedy suffers 'em not, here
is no place for Cowards, nor for
giddy fellows, and Bullies with their
squabbles. When a Sword is once
drawn in Tragedy, the Scabbard may
be thrown away; there is no leaving
what is once design'd, till it be tho-
roughly effected. *Iphigenia Taurica*
went to sacrifice *Orestes*, and she de-
sisted, why? she discover'd him to
be her Brother. None here are such
Fools as by words to begin a quarrel;
nor of so little resolution, to be talkt
agen from it, without some new emer-
gent cause that diverts them. No
(a) simple alteration of mind ought
to produce or hinder any action in
a Tragedy.

(a) *Arifl.*

Yet far more faulty is what follows; the *counter-turn* has no shadow of sense or sobriety. *Melantius* has swaggered away his fury, and now *Amintor* is all agog to be a fighting; for what; but to get his secret back again.

Am. ---Give it me again,
Or I will find it where'soe'er it lies
Hid in the mortall'st part, invent
a way to get it back.

Thou art mad *Amintor*, Bedlam is the only place for thee; if thou comest here with thy madness, Tragedy expects (b) *ut cum ratione insanias*.

Hercules was mad, and kill'd his Wife and Children, yet there was reason in his madness; a mist was cast before his eyes, he mistook them for their enemies, and believ'd he was revenging their quarrel whilst he beat their brains out. That was a madness might move pity; but this of *Amintor* is meerly brutish,

(b) *Terrent*

and

and can move nothing but our aversion. Here is a bluster begun without provocation, and ended without any thing of satisfaction.

But that I may never find a fault without shewing something better. For a quarrel betwixt two friends, with the *turn* and *counter-turn* : let me commend that Scene in the *Iphigenia in Aulide*. Where *Agamemnon* having consented that his Daughter should be sacrific'd, and (that her Mother might let her come the more willingly) sent for her with a pretence that she was to be marri'd to *Achilles* ; yet in a fit of Fatherly tenderness he privately dispatches Letters to hinder her coming. *Menelaus* meets the Messenger going from *Agamemnon*, suspects the business, takes the Letters from him before *Agamemnon*'s face, and read them ; and now arose the contest : *Menelaus* was zealous for the publick good, the more, because it agreed so much with his own interest : and *Agamemnon* had cause enough to stand up for his Daughter ; but yet, at length, with weep-

weeping eyes, and shame for his weakness and partiality, he yielded up the cause. But *Menekius* now seeing the conflict of *Agamemnon*, the tears rowling down his cheeks, and his repentance, this sight melted the heart of him, and now he turns Advocate for *Iphigenia*: He will have *Hellen* and the concerns of *Greece* left to the mercy of Heaven, rather than that his Brother *Agamemnon* should do so much violence to himself; and that so vertuous a young Princess be trapan'd to lose her life.

Here all the motions arise from occasions great and just; and this is matter for a *Scene* truly passionate and Tragical.

We may remember (how-ever we find this Scene of *Melinthius* and *Amin'tor* written in the Book) that at the *Theater* we have a good Scene Acted, there is work cut out, and both our *Æsopus* and *Roscius* are on the Stage together: Whatever defect may be in *Amin'tor* and *Melanthius*; Mr. *Hart* and Mr. *Mobun* are wanting in nothing. To these we owe for
what

what is pleasing in the Scene ; and to this Scene we may impute the success of the *Maids Tragedy*.

The *Drolls* in this *Play* make not so much noise as in the two former ; but are less excusable here. In the former they keep some distance, and make a sort of *interlude*: but here they thrust into the principal places; when we should give our full attention to what is Tragedy. When we would listen to a *Lute*, our ears are rapt with the *tintamar* and twang of the *Tongs* and *Jewstrumps*. A man may be free to make a jest of his own misfortunes : but surely 'tis unnatural and barbarous to laugh when we see another on the Scaffold. Some would laugh to find me mentioning *Sacrifices*, *Oracles*, and *Goddesses* : old Superstitions, say they, not practicable, but more than ridiculous on our Stage. These have not observ'd with what Art *Virgil* has manag'd the Gods of *Homer*, nor with what judgment *Tasso* and *Cowley* employ the heavenly powers in a Christian Poem. The like hints from *Sophocles* and *Euripides*

des might also be improv'd by modern Tragedians ; and something thence devis'd suitable to our Faith and Customs. 'Tis the general reason I contend for : Nor would I more have Oracles or Goddesses on the Stage, then hear the persons speak *Greek*, they are Apes and not men that imitate with so little discretion.

Some would blame me for insisting and examining only what is apt to *please*, without a word of what might profit.

1. I believe the end of all Poetry is to *please*.

2. Some sorts of Poetry please without profiting.

3. I am confident whoever writes a Tragedy cannot please but must also profit; 'tis the Physick of the mind that he makes palatable.

And besides the *purgings* of the *passions* ; something must stick by observing that constant order, that harmony and beauty of Providence, that necessary relation and chain, whereby the causes and the effects, the virtues and rewards, the vices and their punish-

punishments are proportion'd and link'd together ; how deep and dark soever are laid the Springs, and how-ever intricate and involv'd are their operations.

But these enquiries I leave to men of more slegm and consideration.

Othello comes next to hand, but laying my Papers together without more scribbling, I find a volumn, and a greater burthen then I dare well obtrude upon you.

If I blindly wander in erroneous paths, 'tis more then time *Mr. Shepheard* that you set me right, and if I am not so much out of the way ; then most of the main faults in these other Tragedies cannot be far from our view, if we tread not on their skirts already.

I will wait your direction 'ere I advance farther, and be sure of your pardon for what is past. Many seeming contradictions I rather chose to slip over, then to be ever casting in your way some *parenthesis* or some *distinction*.

Many

Many other slips and mistakes too you meet withall, but *the fortune of Greece depends not on them.*

Nor I know could you (that read Hebrew without the pricks) be at a loss for the sense, where you found not a period truly pointed.

If the Characters I have examin'd are the same I take them for, I send you Monsters enough for one *Bartholmew-fair*: but what would vex a Chrillian, these are shown us for our own likenesses, these are the *Duch* Pictures of humane kind.

I have thought our Poetry of the last Age as rude as our Architecture, one cause thereof might be, that *Aristotle's treatise of Poetry* has been so little studied amongst us, it was perhaps Commented upon by all the great men in *Italy*, before we well know (on this side of the *Alps*) that there was such a Book in being. And though *Horace* comprizes all in that small Epistle of his; yet few will think long enough together to be Masters, and to understand the reason of what is deliver'd so in short.

With

With the remaining *Tragedies* I shall also send you some reflections on that *Paradise lost* of *Miltons*, which some are pleas'd to call a Poem, and assert *Prime* against the slender Sophistry wherewith he attacks it : and also a Narrative of *Petrarch's* Coronation in the *Capitol*, with all the *Pontificalibus* on that occasion, which seems wanting in *Selden*, where he treats on that subject. Let me only anticipate a little in behalf of the *Cataline*, and now tell my thoughts, that though the contrivance and economy is faulty enough, yet we there find (besides what is borrow'd from others) more of Poetry and of good thought, more of Nature and of Tragedy, then peradventure can be scrap't together from all those other *Plays*.

Nor can I be displeas'd with honest *Ben*, when he rather chooses to borrow a *Melon* of his Neighbour, than to treat us with a *Pumpion*, of his own growth.

But

But all is submitted to you Men of
better sense, by

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